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CULTURALLY RELEVANT PEDAGOGY AND FIRST-GENERATION
LATINX STUDENT SENSE OF BELONGING

Rachel Lee Abel

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of Doctor of Education
Higher Education Leadership

College of Professional Studies and Advancement
National Louis University

June, 2020

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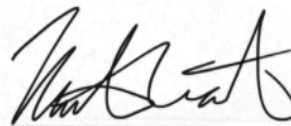
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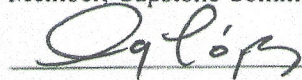


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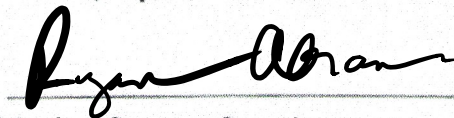


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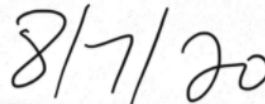
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Member, Capstone Committee



Date Approved

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Abstract

This qualitative research study assessed the impact of culturally relevant pedagogy on first-generation Latinx student sense of belonging at an emerging Hispanic serving institution (HSI). This study adds to current literature around culturally relevant pedagogy, which focused on the close, meaningful relationships between faculty and students in the classroom (Ladson-Billings, Gay, Wlodkowski, & Ginsberg, Stembridge, et al.). The link to sense of belonging (Hurtado & Carter, 1997) demonstrated the importance of academic and non-academic setting connections that led to other social and academic outcomes, which include student satisfaction, motivation to study, and perseverance in completion of a post-secondary. A transformative research framework sought to understand the first-generation Latinx student sense of belonging and their experiences within the larger context of a predominantly white campus and academic course offerings through engagement with a small sample size (Moustakas, 1994). Implications for future research and applications for students, faculty, and leadership at predominantly white institutions on the pathway to becoming an HSI are outlined.

Acknowledgements

I wanted to say a few words of thanks to my friends and family. Thank you to my mother, who has always shown my siblings and I that hard work and an education are at the forefront of our lives. I never knew I had any other option but to study and go to college. I don't think you would have predicted having two daughters with doctorate degrees. Thank you to my friends who have constantly supported throughout this process, always checking in and cheering me on. Lou, Dana, and Jami, you are the best. Thank you to my husband for being my rock. 2019 was a huge challenge for us as a family, but we overcame them. You have always understood how important this doctoral degree was to me and you never wavered in your support. When we didn't know what the future would hold, you still were by my side. This degree would not be possible without you there. I am truly grateful for finding someone who understood me and my desire to continue to learn. I love you. Thank you to my two daughters: Anastasia, you will always be my tough-as-nails fighter. Please remember that everything you want is worth persevering for in the end. Olivia, you are my sweet, sensitive creator. Keep that passion within you and never let the flame die out. Thank you to my support system at work; Jim and Alan you have always made sure that I find a path to success, even if you didn't agree with it. I am thankful for the many ties I have made with Marquette University. I owe many of you dinner out in the Third Ward when I am finished. When I began my first course, I knew nothing about Marquette. However, I have grown to admire the institution who have put so much work into maintaining fidelity to their mission and vision, while still preparing for the future. Thank you to my committee: Jamal, Ignacio, Kathleen, and Ryan. You have all served as an inspiration to me throughout this process.

I have learned so much from all of you in your classes and from your feedback on my research. Lastly, I would like to thank my cohort. Without Lauren, Joe, Jacqueline, Angela, Erika, and Theresa, I would not be here. When I received an e-mail from Joe after the first week or two of class, I had no idea that we would all be supporting each other for three years through every up and down; babies, moves, health challenges, work challenges, you name it. I doubted my pursuit of a doctoral degree in higher education; you have all made sure that I felt challenged, but supported.

I dedicate this dissertation to the matriarchs of my family who have taught me so much in life. Certainly, being a woman with an education, with a career, and a family, would never have been possible without your support throughout the years. Grandma Elsa and Grandma Rita: I couldn't have done it without you. Grandma Rita, you were at my last graduation and I know that you will be with me in spirit at the next one. I hope that I have made both of you proud.

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Chapter One: Institutional Review

Higher education has become an important step along the way to achieving success in a future career and a college degree for many professions holds the key to that gate. With the landscape of education changing and a more ethnically and racially diverse student population entering into higher education, Marquette University (MU) has set a goal to become a Hispanic serving institution (HSI). An HSI has a minimum of a quarter of the student body identifying as Latinx (MU, n.d.). MU's current efforts, with the strategic plan and the institutional mission as the centerpieces, have focused on recruiting more Latinx students to matriculate at their campus. After the Higher Learning Commission noted that MU should deeply examine their current practices (MU, 2013), the change in leadership and the formation of a new strategic plan forged a path for MU to become an HSI. The opening of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) was an important step towards establishing a more inclusive campus. How curriculum and instruction have shifted within the institution and how that directly impacts the group of first-generation Latinx students will also be a benchmark for MU in their strategic enrollment plan and in their stated institutional outcomes.

The research question reviewed the use of culturally relevant pedagogy and how it affected sense of belonging in first-generation Latinx students enrolled at Marquette University (MU). Student sense of belonging directly impacts first-generation Latinx student outcomes in higher education (Spady, 1971; Tinto, 1987, 1993). McNiff (2013) explained that research should be validated and communicated to the public and it should influence further thought in your area of research. MU will become an HSI, moving from 12% of its current Latinx population (MU, 2018) to 25% over the next five years.

According to Newman, Couturier, and Scurry (as cited in Browne, n.d.), 40% of the future higher education students will be Latinx, with many students becoming the first in their families to attain a post-secondary degree.

Marquette University

Throughout the history of the Catholic Jesuit university in the United States, there have been several evolutions to the mission of higher education. Originally the mission was to expand the Catholic Church and students were typically poor immigrants who did not have the basic education to attend other higher education institutions. The Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU) published a mission statement in 2010 which reacted to the changes needed to be made to the evolving outcomes in higher education. The mission divided into themes, including promoting God by educating students to use a critical lens, utilizing service as the base of contributing to the community and to the Church, and educating with the goal of equity and access (AJCU, 2010). The Catholic Church recognizes that there are different perspectives in the world and they would like to be at the table to keep an open dialogue between secular scholarship and the Church.

This chapter will review the internal contexts within Marquette University, the external contexts, and a review of the people that make up the educational system on campus. There is a brief introduction of Jesuit, Catholic universities, Hispanic serving institutions (HSIs), and the evolution of this designation in the United States. The HSI overview and the institutional study are related to the research proposal, supporting first-generation Latinx students in higher education. This chapter will review the internal and external contexts that lead to excellence in higher education institutions and are related to

the mission and vision of MU. These contexts are used as guidelines for MU on the pathway to becoming an HSI, while ensuring that all stakeholders are included along the way.

Internal Context

Mission. The mission of Marquette University “is the search for truth, the discovery and sharing of knowledge, the fostering of personal and professional excellence, the promotion of a life of faith, and the development of leadership expressed in service to others. All this we pursue for the greater glory of God and the common benefit of the human community” (MU, n.d.). The Marquette experience focuses on the four core university values of excellence, faith, leadership and service challenges students to integrate knowledge, faith and real-life choices in ways that will shape the students’ lives.

Historical overview. The identity of the Catholic university has roots in European churches and universities, such as Paris, Oxford, and Cambridge. Marquette University is connected to the Jesuits’ order, meaning that the institution identifies as having ties to the Society of Jesus, founded by St. Ignatius of Loyola in the 16th century. There are many well-known Jesuit universities in the United States, comprised of traditional small universities and others that are comprised of larger populations. Although these universities continue to hold on to their identity and connection to faith, there have been changes throughout history that have allowed for students of any background to attend and receive an excellent education.

In 1967, the Land O’Lakes statement was issued after meetings with Catholic university presidents, trustees, bishops, and religious superiors (O’Brien, 1994). The

group reconfigured the ideas of the Catholic Jesuit university and they discussed distancing themselves from the idea of the Church first and scholarship second. In 1990 Pope John Paul II spoke to Church leaders at a conference and outlined his purpose for Catholic universities, known as *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*: contributing to the Church and society via scientific research on the part of faculty and students, developing the whole student, and training others to the values of service to the community and society (as cited in LaBelle & Kendall, 2016).

Marquette was founded by the Reverend John Martin Henni, the first Catholic bishop of Milwaukee. The land was purchased in 1789 with the help of overseas investors from Belgium (MU, n.d.). Three decades later, the doors of Marquette College opened as a small liberal arts school for men named after Reverend Jacques Marquette, S.J. on August 28, 1881. Since the foundational years, MU has grown to serve more than 11,000 undergraduate and graduate students (MU, 2018) from varying religious, socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic identities.

Quality. The definition of quality in an institution of higher education, as highlighted by Schindler, Puls-Elvidge, Welzant, and Crawford (2015) has been refocused by public pressure to produce student learning outcomes. Marquette University has reinforced this outcome by their recent actions, including funding, research, and building and infrastructure, while never losing sight of their mission, vision, and guiding values. MU's definition of quality as purpose, connected to the mission and vision, along with attaining MU's priority goals. As evident in the 5-year plan, the institution has spent a considerable amount of time mapping out the goals and connecting them to what they believe every person on campus should be striving to achieve. Within

the strategic plan, tied to the guiding values, MU's focus will pursue well-being, research, and a culture of inclusion, engage social responsibility in the community, sustain valuable resources, and form minds and hearts (MU, 2013). For these stated reasons, MU should continue to match achievement of goals to the mission and vision by defining quality through purpose.

Quality measures. Suskie (2014) suggested that quality measures internally at the institutional level should look towards the final desired outcomes; such as career opportunities and capstone experiences, where students are building on skills and content from earlier coursework. Harvey and Green (1993) highlighted that quality is associated with desired outcomes. In the case of MU, high student retention rates, degrees conferred, and the career opportunities for students upon degree or certificate completion are challenging goals that are connected to desired outcomes in higher education. Additionally, MU's mission and vision are focused on an inclusive campus and leaving a positive impact on the greater Milwaukee community. Within the quality measures, there should be a quality indicator that measures student success in coursework or degree programs with disaggregated data on specific student groups, broken down by racial and ethnic identities, and community programs with percentage of student engagement.

Quality has many purposes in assessment of higher education outcomes. The five dimensions of quality (Suskie, 2014) are a culture of relevance, a culture of community, a culture of focus and aspiration, a culture of evidence, and a culture of betterment. For MU, the fitness for purpose attached to quality is the category that best matches the quality measures. Harvey and Green (1993) stressed that fitness for purpose can be used in higher education with standards that are focused on their mission as well as outcomes

that the customer, or student, and the public believe are worthwhile. Marquette University has some challenges in the near future. One of the major challenges that MU faces is enrollment, which in the upcoming years is a common theme across the landscape of higher education in the United States. The decline in total population of high school graduates across the United States is a reality (Seltzer, 2017), which has caused institutions to become more competitive and more selective in their admissions process. Along with the continued enrollment goals, the institution is aiming to be a Hispanic serving institution (HSI). This designation carries with it an expected enrollment target of 25% Latinx students of the total student population. The current Latinx student enrollment needs to steadily increase from a current 12% to 25% (MU, n.d.). The same mission, vision, and values will underpin this important institutional initiative. However, MU will need to continue to evolve systematically, including integration of culturally relevant instructional practices, in order to meet their goal of enrolling and graduating an influx of new students.

When developing variables with which to measure quality, the various stakeholders and their criteria for quality should be kept in mind, along with the leadership at an institution and any accreditation organizations (Harvey & Green, 1993). The variables that serve as measures of quality in higher education today are driven by both students, but also the public, by government, and also by industry. The measures that are currently used for the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) circle around teaching and learning, how the mission is carried out at the institution, and how resources are planned for an allocated in an equitable manner (Higher Learning Commission, 2014).

The measures that are relevant to Marquette University are retention and graduation rates, with disaggregated data for racial and ethnic groups of students (see Table 1 and Table 2) from 2004 to 2018. Additionally, student learning outcomes, the amount of research dollars granted to teams, and the number of students connected to the community in various projects or programs would be beneficial for MU to collect. All of the above-mentioned indicators could be measured, compared to other competitor institutions, and could have set goals that go above simply “meeting the criteria.” Overall, the fitness for purpose approach will put the mission of MU under the microscope and utilize internal and external stakeholders to ensure that it is being carried out (Browne, n.d.).

Table 1

Retention and Graduation Rates at Marquette University (MU, 2018)

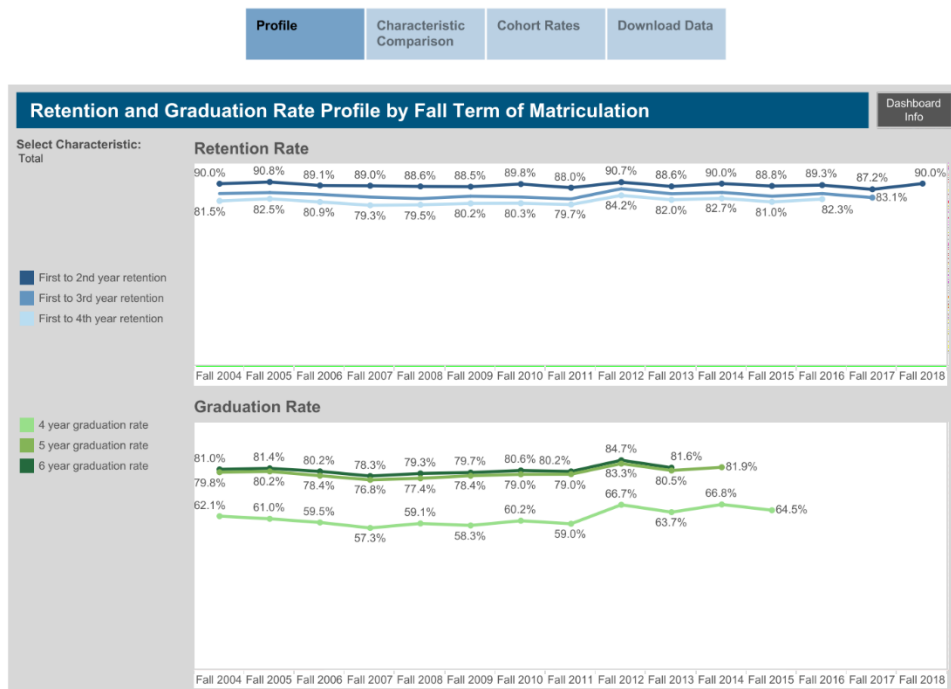
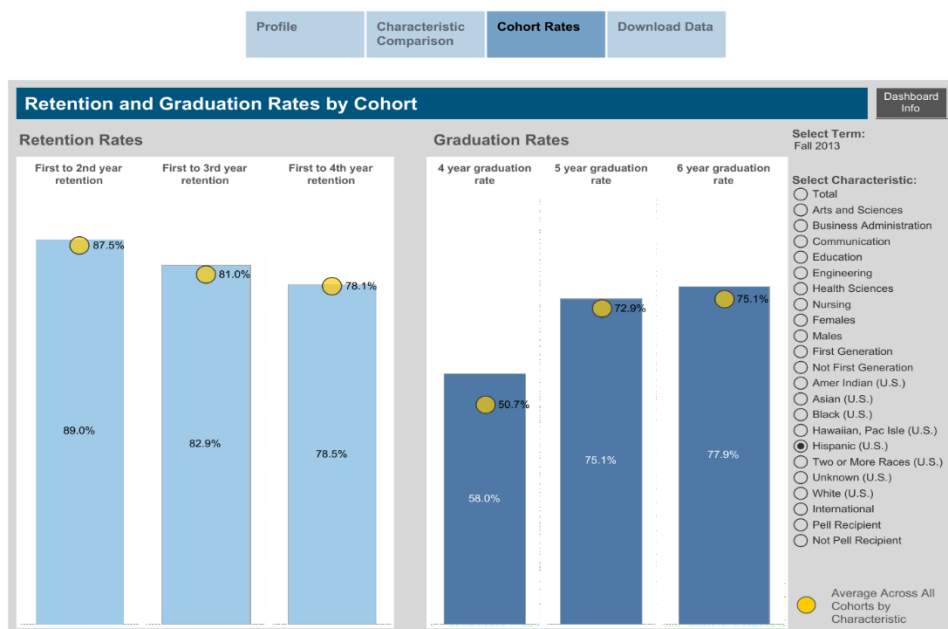


Table 2

Retention and Graduation Rates by Cohort for Hispanic Students at Marquette University (MU, 2018)



Additionally, culturally relevant pedagogy and the positive impact on a more inclusive campus presents itself as an important progress monitoring piece within the quality measures. In regards to first-generation Latinx students and their sense of belonging at MU, faculty have a direct and critical role (Taylor, 2013). While MU's faculty remains predominantly white, the student population is increasing its ethnic and racial diversity. Professional development around cultural competency, communication, and pedagogy is imperative to the success of the strategic plan at MU (2013). An interesting point to consider is that while there is consensus that faculty development towards cultural proficiency is vital to the campus, the individual's belief systems are a major obstacle to change (Howard-Hamilton, 2000). The discussion of these challenges

will continue in upcoming chapters when considering the research and in analyzing the data.

Internal Quality Assurance

The Quality Framework, devised by Suskie (2014), includes supporting and fomenting a culture of excellence through a culture of relevance, a culture of community, a culture of focus and aspiration, a culture of evidence, and a culture of betterment. These areas are interdependent and interrelated, as higher educational institutions can utilize these to guide stakeholders to constructing plans around them. An institution that intentionally focuses on a cycle of goals, planning, and reflection will also be supporting other areas of the Quality Framework. The Higher Learning Commission oversees the accreditation of MU, but the institution must also match their own mission, vision, and guiding values with the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU).

Marquette University (MU) is a private institution with financial stakeholders that include the federal government, alumni, and students and their families. The culture of relevance connects the endowments, donations, investments, and other money to the resources needed to carry out the mission of MU. How well an institution meets students' needs, ensures that resources are appropriately matched, keeps its promises, and serves the public good (Suskie, 2014), is the definition of institutional effectiveness. According to Suskie, focusing merely on mission, vision, and guiding values, as regional accreditation does, is not deep enough. The institution must do more in order to meet the areas mentioned above and to place students at the heart of every decision.

In building a culture of community, the institution should have their systematic policies in line with the mission, vision, and guiding values. The communication plan is

transparent and has many stakeholders' perspectives included, which also guides consistency in expectations. Being an effective communicator is an essential skill in any leadership position. As a leader intends to create buy-in for faculty and staff to support a new initiative, the communication must be clear and concise. Baron (2007) highlighted that initiative confusion, stating that the faculty and staff sometimes don't even realize when an initiative has stopped or how to start with a new initiative, can lead to initiative fatigue or burnout. If an academic leader continually communicates the current status or progress on action steps, the faculty and staff will not be confused about the direction of the initiative. The academic leader must know the audience of each piece of communication, including formalities and how the communication must be succinct in reaching a multitude of stakeholders.

Shared Governance

The shared governance model that can leverage necessary change is organized in a way that best leverages the purpose, goals, and the five cultures of quality (Suskie, 2014) of relevance, community, focus and aspiration, evidence, and betterment with the key stakeholders. The stakeholders involved in this structure are faculty, staff, students, religious leaders on campus, and the community. Shared governance is constructed around the consensus process and may be mandated by legislation, according to Albert (as cited in Diamond, 2002). Fostering collaboration and gathering multi-perspectives is a fundamental aspect of this structure. In creating a more inclusive campus at MU, there should be a willingness to recognize previous belief systems, which may be barriers to moving forward. Furthermore, administrators balance their time working between

faculty, trustees, community, and students (N. Curtis, personal communication, October 28, 2018), in order to effectively encourage meaningful participation.

Marquette has surveyed their faculty in the past to ask about effectiveness of the structured governance and the voice that faculty had in decision-making, with negative feedback. Since the 1990s (MU, 2013) MU has made strides to restructure the governance on campus. There has been progress towards a more inclusive and diverse faculty and staff, which is still a need that will be highlighted in later chapters of the research study. A few changes to how key faculty members and departments were connected with the leadership team were also made. The leadership team and the Board of Trustees collaborated to form a planning committee that included adjunct and tenured faculty, as well as intentionally placing adjunct faculty members on all institutional planning committees. MU has also brought in more students to be a part of planning and surveying in the past five years, which gave leadership the results that the campus was not as inclusive as they had previously thought (N. Curtis, personal communication, October 28, 2018). MU currently works with the community and alumni to form policy creation within the Jesuit institution via committees.

Marquette's goals. The mission-driven goals of an institution can pinpoint strengths and areas of weaknesses upon the implementation of strategic plans. Marquette University (MU) has touted the institution's distinct traits in the strategic plan formalized in 2013 (MU, n.d.). Suskie (2014) suggested that institutions stick with the adage that less is more when outlining objectives and streamlining them to goals. The long-term goals at MU are outlined in themes, which include pursuit of academic excellence, research in

action, a culture of inclusion, social responsibility through community engagement, formation of minds and hearts, and sustainability of valuable resources (MU, n.d.).

Culture of inclusion. The culture of inclusion, for example, explicitly states that MU will support a diverse teaching and learning environment as well as a campus and community that fosters a sense of belonging. The outcomes also have metrics attached to them, that the Director of Diversity and Inclusion oversees, which are focused on outcomes specific to supporting the role in creating a more inclusive campus for faculty, staff, and students. Attracting a diverse student body to enroll at MU and recruiting and hiring diverse staff members are goals that many higher education institutions have outlined in their strategic plan. MU must separate their institution from the others by leveraging the connection to social responsibility and community engagement with the other goals outlined in the strategic plan. This additional theme, which is also part of MU's strategic plan, is connected to the Jesuit values of service to the community. Suskie (2014) recommended that institutions communicate their four elements of purpose; essential activities, distinctive traits, underlying values, and target clientele, within their strategic plan.

Culture of betterment. The last dimension of quality is the culture of betterment within a learning organization. Suskie (2014) noted that excellence is “not just a matter of doing things excellently but doing the right things excellently” (p. 52). The main responsibilities of the leadership team are to meet all students' needs, to remain consistent with their communicated message, to connect resources to needs, to serve the public, and to fulfill these responsibilities in a quality manner.

MU currently has a shared governance structure that supports gathering

perspectives from all stakeholders and a space to reflect and modify, if needed. Some changes may be made in the way the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, the Director of Intercultural Engagement, and the Director of Core Curriculum are currently connected. Currently the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, the Associate Director for Hispanic Initiatives, and the Director of Intercultural Engagement report to separate offices, which ultimately meet with the Provost. The separation of curriculum and inclusive excellence is concerning, as they do not necessarily have a joint physical space and are not connected within the governance structure. However, both curriculum and inclusivity are surely connected to the desired student outcomes and goals of the institution. Lastly, the Vice President for Enrollment Management, a crucial role in a school moving to the HSI designation, should be linked somehow to all of the previously mentioned offices within MU's organization. Currently the Vice President for Enrollment Management does not meet with the Associate Director for Hispanic Initiatives, which would provide a crucial link between onboarding and meeting the needs of the Latinx students on campus.

Decision-Making

Suskie (2014) stressed that within a culture of betterment, an institution should gather evidence to impact its ability to deliver the mission and vision in a quality matter to its stakeholders. Institutions collect evidence, share the evidence, and leverage the evidence during the decision-making process. Marquette University has in place several of the mechanisms that were previously suggested to leverage a culture of quality and a culture of betterment. During the previous cycle of assessment, the Higher Learning Commission suggested that MU review their goals regarding diversity. The strategic plan and the creation of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion are clear results of this

recommendation and that decision-making is based on quality feedback. An example of monitoring of evidence is reviewing the climate study results and making benchmark progress towards all of the goals within the strategic plan and excellence in inclusion. Another important action step that MU put into place is not just changing hiring practices to reflect the student population, but to identify where and why the institution had not been able to achieve this practice in the past. Knowing where an institution stands versus where they want to be in the near future is crucial to the culture of betterment.

MU's mission embeds the five fundamental responsibilities within the dimension of a culture of betterment (Suskie, 2014). MU keeps excellence at the forefront in making decisions that put students first. Some recent decisions have been holding all curriculum accountable for being inclusive to all students, whether they are attending for secular reasons or not. A decision that has not yet come into play is if more of the faculty will move to utilize culturally relevant pedagogy throughout the coursework offered at MU. With the results of the research study, there will be further discussion and recommendations to the leadership team at MU regarding the use of culturally relevant pedagogy. Another piece of evidence that MU utilized was that many alumni wished to extend their undergraduate degrees to meet the demands of professional industries. MU decided to expand their master's and doctoral programs, specifically in the medical fields (MU, n.d.). This decision helped bring back more alumni to the campus and met their needs to extend their learning to become more marketable in today's economy.

Culture of Relevance

Gardner (as cited in Suskie, 2014) defined the culture of relevance as an institution that listens to their students and their needs. The students on campus should

engage in the same challenging coursework in any section, with any professor, in any program, on campus or online. There is a consistency of quality in any coursework, with departments working across the institutions together towards the common goal of students mastering the learning of each course, which is also part of the accreditation process, within both regional and professional organizations. An institution knows their students' needs, and upon graduation, surveys the students, the community, and area industry to study the impact of the degree conferred.

Learning outcomes. The driver for the creation of programmatic learning outcomes, course learning objectives and their subsequent link to assessments has been accreditation in higher education. However, the parallel need to improve student learning, paired with equity and achievement for all students, are also major factors to this change in focus, according to Jankowski, Timmer, Kinzie, and Kuh (2018). When students meet the outcomes of the courses and gain success after graduation, the department and the institution can gauge the success of their curriculum map, according to Diamond (2002). The work of recreating curriculum for the faculty should be viewed as scholarly work (Diamond, 2002) and as student-centered in nature.

Stakeholders. The stakeholders at MU, including students, alumni, faculty, staff, and community, have high expectations about the institution and its ability to meet the responsibilities and keep promises outlined in the strategic plan and the mission. Being able to carry these responsibilities out mean that MU has extended the framework towards integrity (Suskie, 2014). MU commences the student experience with the orientation, which includes families, and has separate sections for new students, transfer students, and spiraling transfer students. From there, the students can be a part of some

committees, including departmental curriculum committees that report out on learning and advancing degrees. Students are the center focus on developing stewards of the Jesuit values of positively impacting the community. Within the Office of Mission and Ministry, students can interact in diverse experiences that connect them directly with the community surrounding the campus. Community impact also speaks to the guiding value of students developing their hearts and their minds.

Stewardship

An institution is responsible for the health and well-being of the learning on campus, for connecting the proper resources efficiently and wisely to the needs of the students, and to ensure the five dimensions of quality (Suskie, 2014). Both efficiency and effectiveness are weighed in order to distribute resources to where they are needed. At MU, the mission intentionally communicates support for whole student development and success, which could mean a conferred degree, an additional certification, or a breakthrough in research. The Quality Framework guides institutions like MU to look beyond the peer reviewed accreditation reports to work towards a culture of excellence through the dimensions of a culture of relevance, a culture of community, a culture of focus and aspiration, a culture of evidence, and a culture of betterment. These guidelines should be communicated to all internal and external stakeholders to demonstrate accountability to excellence, with a focus on students, and to have common working definitions so that data can be collected, reviewed, and disseminated.

Culture of Community

The creation of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) at MU, delegated from the Provost's Office, is a positive step forward and is an important decision towards

supporting all students while becoming a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). Upon review of a calendar published by the ODI (MU, n.d.), for example, MU offers many events, including community partnerships and workshops, to the students, faculty, and staff on campus. Nuñez, Crisp, and Elizondo (2016) researched and sorted many different types of HSIs, but had very little data on medium-sized institutions, such as MU, a private, Jesuit university, and their ability to offer access and inclusion to Latinx students on a larger scale. MU is paving the way for institutions that have not yet formalized plans for creating inclusive campuses. Jocson and Rosa (2015) issued an important warning; that we must be careful not to place one-size-fits-all programs on top of existing instructional systems, hoping that outcomes will change for first-generation Latinx students.

Real change can happen if there is support for student learning by “promoting a culture of learning, appreciation, and understanding” (MU, n.d.). The community connection with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion is another important step for MU. Dr. Ramel Smith, a leading psychologist, who works within the city of Milwaukee, has been on campus on a regular basis consulting with the leadership team and students on campus regarding race-based trauma. The ODI also heads culturally relevant teaching practice sessions for all faculty, adjunct or tenured, on a monthly basis. The chapters that follow will review this information with more depth.

Culture of Focus and Aspiration

Marquette University’s goals are connected to making an impact on the community and to creating an inclusive campus. According to Suskie (2014), MU’s purpose should be communicated clearly; for example, it should be located directly on

their website as their characteristics, their values, and their targeted stakeholder groups. MU is a private, Jesuit, Catholic university that values the connection to the community, which focuses on social justice and students who want to carry out the Jesuit mission. As stated on billboards, many printed recruiting tools, and their website, MU charges students to “Be the difference.” (MU, n.d.).

The campus Office of Ministry, in collaboration with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, seeks to extend students’ ability to impact the surrounding communities by providing direct opportunities to work and volunteer in Milwaukee. MU’s strategic plan strives to demonstrate diversity, inclusion, and equity as the base of the institution’s mission. MU extends this further by grounding their future plans with a “Statement on Human Dignity and Diversity.” This specifically states that Marquette will “recognize and cherish the dignity of each individual regardless of age, culture, faith, ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, language, disability, or social class. A diverse community helps us to achieve excellence by promoting a culture of learning, appreciation, and understanding” (MU, n.d.). Concluding this statement with learning is important as a crucial outcome to any higher education institution. Simply declaring inclusivity and equity without also mentioning how they will make an impact on learning would be amiss. As stated previously, MU has interwoven its promotion of a more inclusive and diverse campus with its strategic plan (MU, n.d.).

With the formation of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion in 2015, MU positioned the strategic plan to have all goals, priorities, actions, and metrics leverage every area of the campus. This also created a system of identification, planning, tracking, measuring, and reflecting that are framed by MU’s mission. Four actionable goals are

identified as critical to MU, which are divided into guiding questions that are centered around which students attend MU, if all MU community members are treated equally and are engaged equally in campus life, if teaching and learning are inclusive in all courses, and how MU engages with the surrounding communities of Milwaukee and its suburbs (MU, n.d.).

These goals are connected to metrics for the Key Performance Initiatives (KPIs). An example is the goal of cohesion of campus-level diversity initiatives with a measurable KPI of collecting reports, evaluating data, and marking milestones via campus-level communication and student surveys through the ODI. The strategic plan's uniqueness to other institutions in the same category as MU is that the mission and the creation of the ODI are completely and wholly connected. There is not a separate program extension that is meant to support first-generation Latinx students, but a holistic plan to include every area of the campus to "cherish the dignity of each individual regardless of age, culture, faith, ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, language, disability or social class" (MU, n.d.).

Culture of Evidence and Betterment

The major desired outcomes of higher education are creating students prepared for the job market, creating new knowledge, and providing the most hospitable environment for research. In order for these outcomes to be positive and to occur on a continual basis, teaching excellence within an institution should be well defined. Students at Marquette University have support and tend to persevere once they matriculate and are enrolled in classes on campus. According to the U.S. Department of Education's College Scoreboard (2015), MU has an 80% graduation rate within a 6-year cohort. 89% of

students who begin classes at MU return the following year. This is a very high number in comparison to other four-year universities, and about 5% higher than Loyola University of Chicago (2015), which is a comparable institution in the market. In addition, 46% of students are receiving some type of federal loan, including a Pell Grant (U.S. Department of Education, 2015).

Another example of a culture of evidence and betterment at MU is The Latino/a Well-Being Research Initiative (LWRI), which teams community leaders and multi-disciplinary faculty members at MU to collaborate to “develop innovative, culturally-relevant research and programming that addresses the psychological, physical, and socioenvironmental factors that influence the lives of Latina/os” (MU, n.d.). The LWRI through the Office of Research and Innovation is another space where MU is leveraging their strategic plan connected with the goal of diversity and inclusion. An example of this research is Dr. Allyson Gerdes, an associate professor of psychology at MU, studying ADHD and Latinx youth, and developing new assessments tools that remove cultural barriers and can be administered in Spanish. Kuh, Jankowski, Ikenberry, and Kinzie (2014) advocated for incentives and rewards to support a culture that encourages a culture of betterment.

External Context

This section outlines the external contexts for Marquette University as a Catholic, Jesuit institution that is moving forward by seeking the Hispanic serving institution (HSI) designation. While the internal contexts and the next chapters will review the inclusion of culturally relevant pedagogy on first-generation Latinx student sense of belonging, the external context connects the HSI designation for MU, which is a federal program. As a

private, four-year institution, MU has several external contexts that help shape their vision finances, enrollment, community partnerships, and external quality assurance. These groups have an important impact on MU, as with any private institutions, because they shape the strategic plan mission, vision, and guiding values.

These external contexts reflect the desired outcomes of higher education; to create new knowledge, to have students prepared for the workforce, and to move students into higher-level thinking skills. Quality assurance is another way in which higher education benchmarks MU against other institutions. The HSI designation is an impetus to closely examine the institution to ensure that a culture of evidence is embedded. While there are other external factors that affect higher education, these specific factors have a correlation to the larger research study.

Quality in an external context holds the institutional accountable for holding true to their mission and vision, while carrying out their strategic plan and measuring the key performance indicators. This cycle must be communicated to all stakeholders, including community, industry partners, the HLC, and to alumni. Reviewing the HSI designation and the support that MU could provide first-generation Latinx students a connection to their strategic plan, MU readily travels outside of the Milwaukee, Wisconsin community to recruit and communicate MU's message.

Enrollment. Marquette University is a four-year private non-profit institution. The basic classification of the university is a doctoral university research activities center (Center for Postsecondary Research, n.d.). The enrollment profile is highly concentrated on undergraduate students. MU's total enrollment is at 11,426 students, with 8,335 undergraduate students and 3,091 graduate students (MU, 2017). Four percent of the

student body is part time, while the full-time student body has remained steady at 96% (National Center for Educational Statistics, n.d.). Fifty-three percent of the students are female and 47% are male. The race/ethnicity of students are as follows: 69% White, 12% Latinx, 7% Asian, 4% African-American, 4% identity as more than one race, and 4% are non-resident alien.

The Latinx student population has experienced the largest increase over the past 10 years. The current age of students is 98% 24 or under and 2% are 25 or older. The students are mostly residential; 29% are from Wisconsin, while 69% are from out of state, and 3% are foreign-born. Ninety-three percent of undergraduate students are not involved in any sort of online learning, while 1% are enrolled in distance learning, and 6% are enrolled in a blended model. In the graduate student population (MU, n.d.), 80% were not involved in any distance learning, 9% were enrolled in a blended model, and 2% were exclusively enrolled in distance learning.

Retention rates. Retention rates for first-time college freshmen were 89% for full-time students and 100% for part-time students (National Center for Educational Statistics, n.d.). Tracking two cohorts of students, the freshmen in the fall of 2009 and the freshmen in the fall of 2011, there were little changes in graduation rates. Fifty-nine percent of students graduated in four years and 80% graduated in six years. Seventy-eight percent of males and 83% of females were retained in the six-year category. The racial and ethnic breakdown of graduation in six years was 82% White, 79% Latinx, 75% Asian, 73% African-American, 76% two or more races, 79% non-resident alien, 50% Native Hawaiian, and 25% American Indian.

Hispanic serving institutions. Hispanic serving institutions (HSIs) are defined as an eligible institution that has an enrollment of undergraduate full-time equivalent students of at least 25% Hispanic students (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). HSIs differ from historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in that the HSI was created around already existing higher education institutions, rather than created as stand-alone institutions (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). The number of HSI designated institutions continues to rise; doubling within the last few decades (Santiago, Taylor & Galdeano, 2016). One of MU's enrollment plan goals, as stated in a previous section, is to enroll enough Latinx student to obtain the HSI status.

HSIs are important designations in receiving federal funding; more than \$100 million was awarded to HSIs in 2015 through the Title V federal grant program (Institutional Development in Undergraduate Education Services, 2016). However, as an HSI, every institution may define the way in which they earmark this financial support (Garcia, 2020). This leaves an opportunity for MU to tie the HSI designation to their mission and vision, embedded in their strategic plan and continuing to make MU stand apart from other institutions. The context of how MU will forge ahead and become an institution that truly serves its Hispanic students will be discussed in the final chapter along with recommendations for the leadership team.

Strategic enrollment plan. The Marquette University Strategic Enrollment Plan (MU, 2015) defines the institution's current enrollment goals connected to their beliefs of impacting society and the nearby communities. The enrollment plan strives to market to, recruit, and enroll more first-generation Latinx. Furthermore, leveraging institutional strategies towards persistence and retention fits with the direction of Marquette

University (MU). Connected to the mission, vision, and values of MU, the enrollment office created their marketing plan by making a situation analysis, describing their target audience, listing marketing goals, developing marketing communications, and setting the marketing budget.

Marketing plan. One of the first steps in the marketing plan is a situation analysis, including data on the services that other higher education institutions, such as Loyola University in Chicago, are providing, and the threats and weaknesses. The strategic enrollment team performs the data analysis and provides the enrollment office with an action plan to begin marketing to prospective students. One major threat to MU is ensuring that the financial aid office is ready to offer packages to students who come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds at an increasing rate (MU, n.d.). The target marketing audience connects to MU's goal of increasing enrollment from 12% Latinx students to 25%.

The marketing strategy at MU, in tandem with the framework of the 7 Ps of Enrollment and Admission Efforts (Hossler & Bontrager, 2015), focuses on the desired outcome of increasing the overall percentage of Latinx students enrolled at MU. If, for example, many Latinx students enroll in MU because of their religious affiliation, the marketing strategy should focus on the Jesuit Catholic values on campus. A strong brand for MU includes market positioning that publicizes the social justice, inclusive campus environment, and the community service aspects of the institution. MU must leverage these aspects and position the MU brand as unique to other competing institutions. Conveying these points are part of the integrated marketing communications (Hossler &

Bontrager, 2015), which includes public relations and direct marketing via social media in English and Spanish.

From the front end, MU admissions officers use relational recruiting, which focuses on the individual student needs and motivators (Hanover Research, 2014). MU has hired two more Latinx admissions officers, who speak Spanish and English. These officers reach out to recruit students nationwide and represent first contact of the university's brand. The formation of partnerships with area schools in Milwaukee, that will allow student insight into the courses at MU and extend better preparation to enter into more courses with success, like dual credit, are on the top priority list. The current strategic enrollment plan has a time interval of six years, but the designated benchmarks along the way assess the plan and allow for adjustment or changes. The strategic enrollment steering committee will need flexibility during the last two years of the plan, as MU increases the yield on Latinx students.

Financial resources. As stated in a previous section, the current endowment at MU is \$550 million dollars (MU, n.d.). Alumni donors specify the amount of money they would like to give to a particular funding area. Some of these funds go directly to help students in financial need and other funds go directly to capital funding, such as building new centers like the Hub Research Center for athletes. Some challenges lie ahead with federal financial aid, the reliance on tuition dollars from students, and the growing capital costs to run a learning institution that can compete with others. These are not local issues, but are also trending nationwide (Fain, 2017). Even though MU is a private institution, students may receive the Wisconsin state financial aid grant, based on need, but it is not enough to cover the \$55,000 (MU, n.d.) total price of tuition and living

expenses. The cost of individual student aid then shifts to MU. In order for MU to continue enrollment goals, they must find ways to attract first-generation Latinx students that have financial aid needs while bridging the gap between the students' needs and the institutional grants that MU can offer.

Marquette University has in place several of the mechanisms that were previously suggested to leverage a culture of quality and a culture of betterment. During the previous cycle of assessment, the Higher Learning Commission suggested that MU review their goals regarding diversity. The strategic plan and the creation of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion are clear results of this recommendation. Another important action step that MU put into place is not just changing hiring practices to reflect the student population, but to identify where and why the institution had not been able to achieve this practice in the past. Knowing where an institution stands versus where they want to be in the near future is crucial to the culture of betterment (Suskie, 2014).

A good research resource is the Manpower Demonstration Research Center (MDRC, n.d.) that posits important questions around academic achievement and students from traditionally disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds. Kuh et al. (2014) advocated for incentives and rewards to support an institution that encourages a culture of betterment. Currently MDRC researches the low college success rates of Latinx students and other underrepresented groups. California's higher education systems have made large investments designed to improve student outcomes in recent years. The product of this collaboration is the Latino Academic Transfer and Institutional Degree Opportunities (LATIDO) project, with the named outcome of increasing transfer and college completion rates of Latinx students attending Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) in

California (MDRC, n.d.). The connection between this research and the overall ability of HSIs to promote achievement, will allow for further exploration of how HSIs can support cultural responsiveness and decreasing the achievement gaps for the expanding Latinx student population at MU. The following section connects the student to the supports that exist on campus to ensure support for the outcomes of higher education.

Considerations of People

This section of the chapter will focus on the students at MU, the faculty and staff, and student affairs, as guided by culturally relevant pedagogy and students' sense of belonging on campus. The area of student affairs connects students to the campus outside of their academic coursework and recognizes the individual identity of each student. The ability of MU to support the increase of first-generation Latinx students and their sense of belonging will need the support of both academics and student affairs. In this portion of the institutional study, the importance of student engagement, student success, and student perseverance are the basis of how MU supports the goals, motivations, and challenges for each individual student.

Latinx identifying first-generation students, racial and ethnic identity development, and persistence are interconnected in higher education. As the number of eligible Latinx students to attend a post-secondary education increases, including first-generation students, it is important for MU to continue to search for ways to support students on their campus in an inclusive manner. MU has many growth opportunities in the area of hiring faculty and staff that mirror the current student population. Currently the total number of faculty and staff represent less than half of the Latinx student population and in number of full-time faculty, MU has fallen behind. The Latinx staff,

which includes student affairs, has increased and includes admissions officers that were first-generation students. Additionally, the shared governance model serves as a structural support for MU's faculty, staff, and administration to continue moving forwards towards becoming an HSI. As in previous sections of this chapter, first-generation Latinx students are being supported directly and indirectly through the student affairs side of MU's structure. The direct support of academic success, in terms of the culturally relevant curriculum and instructional practices, is the focus of the research study.

Student profile. There are more than 11,000 students attending Marquette University (MU, n.d.). The majority of students from Illinois and Wisconsin enroll in MU, as they are within close vicinity of their families. The overall student population includes a 7% commuter student (MU, n.d.), which means students from the greater Milwaukee area are attracted to the school. Not all students are Catholic or identify themselves as religious. A large majority of students attended public high schools, but about 37% of students attended a Catholic or other private school (MU, n.d.). Students from all over the United States, as well as other countries, attend Marquette. The fall of 2018 student profile is in line with MU's stated goal of becoming a Hispanic serving institution (HSI). Out of the approximately 2,000 students who matriculated that year, 584 were students of color and 489 were first-generation students.

Students are supported through many programs, such as the Educational Opportunities Program, the Honors Program, the Freshman Frontier Program, and the ROTC. Students attending MU will benefit from the excellent academic programs, but also the strong connection to the Office of Mission and Ministry (OMM), mentioned in a

previous section. The OMM connects to MU's mission and vision of positive community impact. Many programs run through this office and students are expected to spend part of their time on campus supporting others in the community. In the second chapter, critical race theory (CRT) guides the student affairs function on campus and how the students at MU are supported in their sense of belonging within the community.

Faculty and staff profile. Tenure can be a useful tool for motivating faculty members in higher education institutions. Teaching, research, and service to the community are a few points that expound the promotion to tenured faculty member. According to Diamond (2002), institutions need to be at the base of the entire system in order to reward the scholarship and collaboration that speaks to the priorities of the faculty. The disjoint may arrive at the planning for a mission and vision at the institution, which changes with new leadership, but the evaluation process has not changed drastically and it may not promote the same values of the mission and vision. In another section, the criteria of promotion for faculty are connected to the strategic plan at Marquette University.

Teaching is one of the factors to consider in promotion of faculty, as it is valuable to have knowledge being reconstructed between the teacher and the student. The definition of excellent teaching, according to the Marquette University strategic plan (MU, 2013) is presenting on an area of expertise, sharing knowledge, and creating an atmosphere of discovery. These conditions of teaching further the motivation of students to pursue their education. As MU moves to become a designated HSI, the Latinx student population will increase dramatically by 13% over the next six years (MU, n.d.). The mission and vision will provide the guidance to grow and stay true to the core of the

institution. Effectively teaching and best practices in the classroom, which include culturally relevant pedagogy, will ensure that student sense of belonging is developed on campus.

There are 719 current full-time, tenure track faculty, 527 part-time adjunct faculty, and 1,680 staff who are employed by MU to support the mission and vision of the institution (MU, 2018). In the full-time faculty, 56% are men and 44% are women, 78% are white and only 3.5% are Latinx. In the part-time faculty, 56% are men and 44% are women, 88% are white and only 2.4% are Latinx. The staff members are 61% women and 39% men, 76% are white and 6.1 % are Latinx. In reviewing these numbers of the current population and racial makeup of the faculty and staff at MU, there are huge growth opportunities to represent the student population. If the current Latinx student population is 12% (MU, n.d.), hiring practices and goals should be such that faculty and staff are of a similar percentage. The later chapters that discuss the research findings and the analysis will discuss the importance of hiring more faculty of color. The amount of white men in full-time, tenured faculty positions at MU mirrors current trends in higher education and can cause hyper invisibility or disengagement from faculty of color (Settles, Buchanan, & Dotson, 2018).

Leadership. According to Jones, Lefoe, Harvey, and Ryland (2012), higher education and leadership frameworks that meet the challenges of post-secondary education today also maintain the mission and vision of the institution. Relationship building is one of the most important elements of leadership and when a shared governance model fails evaluating the types of relationships that the administration had built with faculty, staff, students, and the community. The success of this model is

contingent upon the relationships and culture that are built in order to move the institution forward.

Trends in enrollment, such as the HSI designation, and changes in traditional higher educational institutional structures have pushed leadership at MU to evolve. The changes occurring on campus, including decreasing white student enrollment and skyrocketing costs attached to tuition, have underlined the importance of leadership at MU. If a majority of faculty and staff have buy-in towards the HSI designation and the Board and the Provost continually communicate the current status or progress on action steps, confusion will not be created about the direction of the initiative.

While leaders in education wear many hats, the importance of relationship building becomes even more vital to the role of the leader as change agent. It would be impossible to expect that someone would immediately change just because the leader asked them to without having first learned where the faculty or staff member passions showed up, what their current skill set provided the larger institution, and, most importantly, listening to their needs. The Board and the Provost are expected to collaborate and connect to many different groups in order to impact students' lives in a positive way. The Board, for example, now includes a Latinx member, Ms. Johanna M. Bauza, who graduated from MU and is directly invested in the HSI initiative.

The current leaders need to develop the ability to celebrate, lift up, and build capacity in future leaders. In reviewing the shared governance charter at MU, there is a system in place that allows for any faculty and staff to develop themselves to their full potential. This includes a positive praise rewards system, specific, targeted professional development, and mentoring via the leadership team. While MU has begun to align hiring

practices with the increasing Latinx student population, faculty and staff should be equally invested in this process. Formally, the capacity building occurs within the structure of the shared governance model and informally at leadership coffee chats and individualized sit-down meetings.

Student affairs. Within the Division of Student Affairs at MU, the aim is to support all students in their individual development throughout their time on campus. For traditionally marginalized, underserved, and minoritized populations within the institution, there is a focus within the Division on first-generation students. There is direct support for this group of students, including tips on the website and common challenges (MU, n.d.) and many co-curricular activities that serve to link students to their own development. This section will review racial and ethnic identity and critical race theory as connected to the goals of MU to become a Hispanic serving institution (HSI), including challenges to supporting first-generation Latinx students on a majority white campus.

The over-application of stereotyping and having cultural days that serves to make blanket constructs of ethnic identity need to be avoided. As de Certeau (as cited in White & Lowenthal, 2011) suggested, a place is connected with those in power, while a space serves everyone, including students who have been marginalized or whose voices have not been heard. The creation of a space or a counter-space allows for support on an inclusive campus. A model for students, faculty, and staff can also connect to a positive academic identity for students of color as they begin to revise aspects of their own self-identity and promote the overall inclusivity of the campus. The goal for MU to become an HSI, along with the institutional mission and vision will continue to guide these

conversations.

In addition, there are specific learning outcomes for the Office of Student Development, along with the institutional goal of becoming an HSI, and any activities that are housed within, which include: contributing to the development of positive community, using their talents to benefit others, increasing their multicultural competence, demonstrating congruence between their values and their actions, and continuing to participate in service as a commitment to justice. (MU, n.d.). On the surface, the website points to the desired outcome of an inclusive campus, but no further information appears about how this affects students.

The other questions that remain unanswered are the indicators that the Office of Student Development and the benchmarking that should occur in order to show evidence of developing each and every student on campus, including their sense of belonging. Gilligan and Richards (as cited in Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2016) recognized the importance for campuses that are becoming more diverse to model and teach students moral development in order to give marginalized student groups space to share their perspectives. First-generation Latinx students have many layers, which include identity, academic readiness, language, and culture, that need to be considered on a student to student basis.

Student affairs at MU addresses student development as one of the intended outcomes of higher education. First-generation Latinx student development should include a support system around intersecting identities, including ethnic and racial identities, socio-economic background, and the ability to move around the academic landscape of the majority culture, with the intended outcome of persistence and retention

in higher education. Diagnosing an issue related to moral development and covering it with one program for all will not address individual student needs. Assimilation into the majority culture is not the goal to providing support for marginalized students. While Marquette University (MU) addresses whole student development via student affairs, first-generation Latinx student development also needs a space and a place within their own affinity group in order to facilitate the strategic plan of creating an inclusive campus.

MU has made a concerted effort to recruit Latinx students, as evident in their strategic enrollment initiative (MU, 2015). The Jesuit values and mission of inclusivity, social justice, and making an impact on the community are connected to these plans. As the campus has a current majority white student population, the inclusiveness of the campus needs to be reviewed, revised and revamped. Curriculum and instruction are at the core of this process, with leadership guiding MU into a new era. The administration team will shore up resources, review the organizational flow, and hire the right faculty, including faculty of color, to teach students. The research proposal will inform MU of additional steps and areas of focus.

Jeannie Oaks (American Education Research Association, 2016) highlighted the benefit of research in that it is a way to grow, learn from others, collaborate to see new perspectives, and to improve our society. The speech linked the impact of an inclusive campus on first-generation college students, which could include research-based practices in teaching. Being able to inform others in higher education about best practices in instruction are the practical implications to this research question. Instructional practices, evaluations, and grading practices need to make continued shifts in higher education. These shifts should include Universal Design for Learning (UDL), to

review curriculum and student learning outcomes, student voice and choice, self-reflection, and the loop of curriculum design to course learning targets to formative and summative evaluations that demonstrate student learning.

Possible challenges. The challenges that have become barriers to improving quality at MU start with curriculum and instructional practices that are grounded in research and that reflect culturally relevant materials. Suskie (2014) mentioned marginalization of well-established faculty, distrust, and narrow-mindedness as possible obstacles to real improvement in teaching and learning. There is a definite connection between the culture of isolation and these aforementioned elements. An additional categorization of these root causes is fear of loss of what faculty know, of their position of authority of knowledge, and that an “other” may be able to replace them as the expert. How do we replace this feeling of loss and create an action-based model, focused on learning and taking a journey together? As Ladson-Billings (2013) underscored, the research and work around culturally relevant teaching and its impact have been known for many years, but still truly implementing it with fidelity in institutions has been slow work.

Some of the possible ways to resolve these challenges are to review the resources available for the departments or for the academic areas and their connection to the stated mission, to ensure that hiring reflects the student body, and to have cross-departmental conversations about curriculum and instruction, grounded in reflection and student input. The resources involved include money, but it is also faculty who are in classrooms spending their valuable time to relearn the best way to show up for their students, which is flexible and changing depending not upon their content expertise or one programmatic

instructional strategy, but who is in present in their classes. Lastly, the research can serve as a call to action for institutions that have yet to fully serve all of the Latinx students on their campus. This is an ongoing effort, should change with the students who are enrolled at the institution, and should be a reflective process involving leadership and all stakeholders.

Conclusion

The internal workings of a higher education institution should be regulated with student learning outcomes at the center. All other aspects of the learning institution, research, new buildings, shared governance structure, should be put into place in order to leverage student learning. After a review of the current system, including internal and external contexts, and considerations of people, there should be mechanisms in place flexible enough within the institution to shift in areas that are hindering progress. Suskie (2014) suggested that institutions look beyond peer review to gather evidence towards realizing their mission.

The creation of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) at Marquette University (MU) is a positive step towards becoming a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) in order to support Latinx students' academic and social-emotional wellness while pursuing a 4-year degree. MU is taking an important stance in making plans to include more Latinx students on campus. The research study incorporated culturally relevant pedagogy and the impact on student sense of belonging on campus. As the strategic plan and the pursuit of the HSI designation move forward, the Marquette experience should remain focused on the institutional mission and the four core university values of excellence, faith, leadership and service.

The following chapter will synthesize the research study of culturally relevant pedagogy with student sense of belonging and Critical race theory. A cornerstone of the literature review is the intersecting identities of first-generation Latinx students. In considering the support of each student, culturally relevant pedagogy will be defined and categorized as what it is and what it is not in the classroom. The literature focuses on the marginalization of students of color in higher education and their experiences in a post-secondary setting, considering the needs of first-generation Latinx students in making connections to a predominantly white institution.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

Introduction

The literature review will focus on racial and ethnic identity and student development, culturally relevant teaching practices, and the impact on students' sense of belonging in higher education. While a plethora of research exists regarding culturally relevant pedagogy, there is a scarcity of research on the impact of academic learning and sense of belonging that occurs when a student has experienced culturally relevant pedagogy embedded within a post-secondary course (Sleeter, 2011). When sectioning this research further to focus on first-generation Latinx students, the limited research implies that this particular group of students needs further studies conducted.

According to Phinney (as cited by Torres, Jones, & Renn, 2009) ethnic identity is used to describe the level of commitment someone has to ethnic culture or heritage and the level of exploration into those cultural values. Racial and ethnic identity and student development have strong ties to Latinx students and persistence in higher education. As the general population of college going students decreases in the upcoming decade, the amount of eligible Latinx students to continue their post-secondary education will increase (Flores, 2017). As Cornell and Hartman (as cited in Johnston-Guerrero, 2016) stated, ethnic and racial identity are not the same, but they can also be deeply entwined, with many overlaps. The new literature reflects the movement towards understanding intersectionality and the impact on student development and sense of belonging.

Classic Theories on Racial Identity and Student Development

To begin a review of ethnic identity, it is crucial to first unpack the fundamental theories that have been created around racial and ethnic identity joined with student development theory. Phinney (1992) formed a three-stage model around ethnic identity development. In the first stage, students accept the values of the majority, or unexamined ethnic identity. The next stage is ethnic identity search, which is categorized by the student interacting with the community that surrounds them, which causes students to seek out more information about their culture and values. The last stage is achieved ethnic identity, when students can appreciate their ethnicity and balance it with the majority culture. At this stage, the student can relate to multiple cultures, while still valuing their own.

Ferdman and Gallegos (2001) created a model framework for Latinx student development and the recognition of the diversity of the Latinx label, making it impossible to make a blanket statement that would cover the experiences of every student pertaining to this ethnic group. This fact affects the way in which students affiliate themselves with other ethnic groups and the majority culture. This model conceptualizes how Latinx identifying students interact with other cultural or ethnic identities. There are six different types of orientations, including Latinx-integrated, Latinx-identified, subgroup identified, Latinx as other, undifferentiated or denial, and white-identified. As Torres (2003) noted, the issue with this model is that it fails to address the fact that students may fluidly move from one orientation to the next.

Torres (2003) presented the bicultural orientation model (BOM), describing how Latino students interact and become part of different cultural groups. There are four

cultural orientations under this model: bicultural, Latinx/Hispanic, Anglo, and marginal. Each of these groups depends upon the comfort and connection with their ethnic affiliation and to the majority culture. The factors that had an impact on the BOM are the environment in which the student was raised, immigration and generational status, and the student's sense of marginalization from the majority culture. As an example of the BOM theory, Latinx students who were raised in a majority Latinx environment, with Spanish being an important part of their education or their family life, had stronger connections to Latinx identity. Torres (2003) highlighted the importance of a positive or negative event, including the impact of stereotyping or racism, on the student's relationship with the majority culture. Thus, moving to a higher education institution that is drastically different from a student's bicultural orientation will have an influence on the ability to enjoy success and even the way in which they engage with their home life.

Intersectionality

Students who exist within multiple marginalized identities experience discrimination, social isolation, rejection, and bullying, which can negatively impact their ability to encounter academic success and social-emotional growth (Eager, 2019). The shift in research and theory on ethnic and racial identity as it pertains to student development, began with theories based on fixed phases, while current literature describes a fluid process that can occur at any point and may or may not be part of a continuum. McCall (2005) posited that ethnic identity occurs in phases. It is social constructed and defined as beliefs about oneself in relation to others' culture and beliefs. This construct also refers to how one engages in or expresses their beliefs and is multi-dimensional, rather than attempting to group students with only one characteristic or

factor.

The diversity within the first-generation Latinx population includes Afro-Latinxs, Asian-Latinxs, recently-arrived immigrants, and non-Spanish speaking students, all of whom can experience a higher degree of marginalization than white students, therefore promoting the idea that Critical race theory (Villalpando, 2003) needs an approach that includes intersectionality. The stereotypes that have been perpetuated within the educational system by grouping Latinx students together, rather than students as individuals with varying needs, have long lasting effects. One Latinx student may identify as white from Mexico, while another may identify as first-generation Latinx from Puerto Rico. By developing a support system for both academic and students' sense of belonging in higher education via relationships and mentoring, colleges and universities can affirm the multitude of ethnic and racial identities that exist on campus.

Johnston-Guerrero (2016) utilized a zipper visual model to explain the intersection between race and ethnic identity on either side of one another. The actual zipper represents the student, researcher, or educator taking control over the construction of the racial and ethnic identity and whether or not the experience will be positive or negative. Moya and Markus (as cited by Johnston-Guerrero, 2016) explained that the focus on one side of the zipper or another can also lean towards racial identity, which could be negative outcomes such as racism, or ethnic identity, which could be positive outcomes such as belonging and celebration of beliefs. This model also gives more flexibility to the fluid movement that occurs in racial and ethnic identity.

Ethnic and Racial Identity and Student Success

In researching racial and ethnic identity, there is a clear connection to success, both social-emotionally and academically, in higher education. Yosso (2006) pointed to Latinx students' perspectives on issues of power, privilege, and marginalization in terms of impact on their cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal development in higher education. White and Lowenthal (2011) noted that students with a well-developed ethnic identity had higher levels of self-esteem and quality of life, which ultimately allowed for the students to persist in higher education. These students also applied multicultural competency skills; they were more likely to fluidly move from one ethnic group to another and they had coping mechanisms towards negative events, like racism and stereotyping.

This research can be applied to any practitioner who is in a higher education leadership position looking to serve Latinx students. The over-application of stereotyping and having cultural days that serves to make blanket constructs of ethnic identity need to be avoided. Racial and ethnic affinity groups should have spaces on campus that can allow for processing within the Latinx community. As de Certeau (as cited in White & Lowenthal, 2011) suggested, a place is connected with those in power, while a space serves everyone, including students who have been marginalized or whose voices have not been heard. The creation of a space or a counter-space allows for support on an inclusive campus. This can also connect to a positive academic identity for students of color as they begin to revise aspects of their own self-identity.

Sense of Belonging and Academic Success

First-generation Latinx students are a growing group in higher education in the United States. Twenty-five percent of students 18 and under have an immigrant parent (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2015). There are some unique circumstances that first-generation students confront, besides the rigors of college, which are adaptation, in some cases language, and navigating majority white culture on campus. A majority of the same first-generation Latinx group comes from less former education and more distressed social-economic backgrounds (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008). The stress that comes from being a child of immigrants or being an immigrant, themselves can have a profound effect on sense of belonging and academic success.

The studies and literature around sense of belonging in Latinx students (Spady, 1971; Tinto, 1987, 1993) were defined as a perceived social integration on campus. The students had a connection with other students on campus and experienced close, meaningful relationships. There was a lack of feeling pressured by differences between the majority white culture and their own Latinx identity. These connections lead to other positive outcomes such as student satisfaction, motivation to study, and ultimately influenced the students in continuing their college education.

The literature from the 1980's through the early 2000s suggested that first-generation students brought a lower level of cultural and social capital to their college experience (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Pascarella, Pierson, & Wolniak, 2004), with the definition of "capital" fixed within the majority white framework. This deficit approach to students, their background, and what supposed experiences they needed to have prior to entering higher education perpetuates a theory that the student "needs" more

than a student from the majority white culture. These early studies used variables such as precollege experiences, cognitive development; time spent studying, participation in intercollegiate athletics, and volunteer work.

The research of second- and third-year first-generation students in higher education stated that they had fewer credit hours and carried more responsibilities than their peers, such as working a significant number of hours during the week (Pascarella et al., 2004). Despite having similar skills in such areas as critical-writing, students whose parents did not attend college had fewer interactions with peers on campus and had lower grades than their peers. This led to many changes in higher education, including building a more robust experience for all students by enhancing the student affairs offices. In the last few years, this has been extended to specifically naming a director of diversity and inclusion and by creating offices to support the development of all students. Institutions must also be prepared to provide counseling and psychological services within the student services office to ensure social-emotional health.

Hurtado and Carter (2006) underlined the limitations to studies about Latinx students in higher education, which merged critical race theory and sense of belonging studies. There is a link between Latinx students, their academic success and their participation in college. However, there is little clarity around if participation and academics directly impact the psychological realm of sense of belonging on a campus. There is even less clarity and research around first-generation Latinx students. Being a part of a college or university may represent a different value for this group of students, who have typically been marginalized within the higher education system.

Developing intersecting identities may be the key to first-generation Latinx

students' connectivity with peers, who often navigate between several cultural groups. When students maintained dual-identities in their racial and ethnic spaces, they also improved their mental health, academic progress, and persistence (Cardoso & Thompson, 2010). Developing strong relationships on campus, in tandem with culturally relevant pedagogy, contribute to a thriving student in their academic engagement, attendance, and continuation with their education. Supporting students' development of their multiple identities, connecting them to resources, facilitating discussions and allowing for students to use translanguaging were critical activities for all faculty and staff (Case, 2019; Palmer et al., 2015). Loveland (2018) reiterated the importance of the institution placing high values on the voices of their Latinx students and offering spaces to hear their needs and perspectives.

Support to connect first-generation Latinx students' sense of belonging should also occur outside of the classroom. As mentioned in earlier literature, the student affairs office on campus can have a vital role in facilitating this link. In studies around being a first-generation student (Peterson & Hamrick, 2009; Sue et al., 2007), there are insecurities that can emerge such as lack of knowledge about being a student, lack of confidence in academic levels, and a feeling of not being a part of the "whole" campus. Some possible solutions within the student affairs office assist students in getting involved in special-interest groups, encouraging students to seek out counseling services when needed, and to employ faculty and staff that mirror the student population.

Constructing and implementing a mentor program is another way in which students could be connected to the campus, providing additional academic and social-emotional guidance. There is research that specifically tracks Latinx students in higher

education involved in a mentor program, but this is more limited when addressing the needs of first-generation Latinx students. The literature that does exist implicates a positive relationship between mentees' academic outcomes and sense of belonging with a mentor program (DuBois & Rhodes, 2006; Karcher, Davis, & Powell, 2002; Zimmerman, Bingenheimer, & Behrendt, 2005). Specific to Latinx students, mentors had a more positive impact on their mentees when they had a similar academic experience, had high academic achievement, thus providing a model for the mentee, and included the students' families in the process.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

As institutions become more diverse, but also inclusive in practices, culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2013, 2014) paired with high expectations and relationship-building can address the needs in the classroom and close the achievement gap. However, the relationships that students create while on campus in non-academic settings must also be a considerable portion. When institutions become more racially, culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse, students' needs shift and programs should change (Alvarez, 2019; Eager, 2019). Faculty development is at the heart of looking at changes on campus, which mitigate structural and cultural barriers to any classes on campus. Sampson, Moore, and Roegman (2019) suggested that institutions first review where inequities lie within outcome data, such as course learning outcomes and program learning outcomes. Using Universal by Design (UbD) curriculum mapping, which focuses on differentiation, directly supports designing courses to embed culturally relevant pedagogy at the forefront, and can also leverage formative assessments and provide more individualized support for students, which causes students to accelerate

their learning.

Culturally relevant pedagogy is based on research grounded in students' learning needs as connected with their own identities and culture (Ladson-Billings, 1995). In considering culturally relevant pedagogy and the purpose of fit for higher education, it is important to note that the response that a student has to classroom activities and assessments is deeply embedded in their previous experiences and their culture (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995). This means that at a predominantly white institution, it is possible that many faculty members have not encountered many Latinx students or have not had professional development to reflect upon teaching practices to meet the needs of a racially diverse classroom. As previously stated in another section of this chapter, not working within a culturally relevant framework in the classroom has an inherent deficit approach, as previous research was based on what students of color brought to the table as lacking to their white peers, rather than adding to the educational community as a whole. Again, some research is based on trying to understand internal motivation in students and what actions they take, rather than anything specific about the curriculum and how instruction becomes more inclusive. Wlodkowski and Ginsberg constructed a framework (see Figure 1) built on inclusion, attitude, meaning, and competence that were a working model that students and teachers created to engage students in their learning. While this model touches upon important structures within culturally relevant pedagogy, it does not fully incorporate students' cultures, but rather tags them as different.

Establish Inclusion	<p><i>Norms:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasize the human purpose of what is being learned and its relationships to the students' experience. • Share the ownership of knowing with all students. • Collaborate and cooperate. • Treat all students equitably. Invite them to point out behaviors or practices that discriminate. <p><i>Procedures:</i> Collaborative learning approaches; cooperative learning; writing groups; peer teaching; multi-dimensional sharing; focus groups; and reframing.</p> <p><i>Structures:</i> Learning communities and cooperative base groups</p>
Develop Positive Attitude	<p><i>Norms:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relate teaching and learning activities to students' experience or previous knowledge. • Encourage students to make choices in content and assessment methods based on their experiences, values, needs, and strengths. <p><i>Procedures:</i> Clear learning goals; problem solving goals; fair and clear criteria of evaluation; relevant learning models; approaches based on multiple intelligences theory, pedagogical flexibility based on style, and experiential learning.</p> <p><i>Structure:</i> Culturally responsive teacher to student communication</p>
Enhance Meaning	<p><i>Norms:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide challenging learning experiences involving higher order thinking and critical inquiry. Address relevant, real-world issues in an action-oriented manner. • Encourage discussion of relevant experiences. Incorporate student dialect into classroom dialogue. <p><i>Procedures:</i> Critical questioning; guided reciprocal peer questioning; posing problems; decision making;</p> <p><i>Structures:</i> Posing problems and modeling</p>
Engender Competence	<p><i>Norms:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect the assessment process to the students' world, frames of reference, and values. • Include multiple ways to represent knowledge and skills and allow for attainment of outcomes at different points in time. • Encourage self-assessment. <p><i>Procedures:</i> Feedback; contextualized assessment; authentic assessment tasks; portfolios and process-folios; tests and testing formats critiqued for bias; and self-assessment.</p> <p><i>Structures:</i> Narrative evaluations; credit/no credit systems</p>

Figure 1. Four Conditions Necessary for Culturally Responsive Teaching (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995)

As institutions incorporate culturally relevant pedagogy, there are three identified areas that need to be developed including high academic expectations; cultural competence embedded in the curriculum, developing students' critical consciousness, and established relationships between faculty and students (Jones, 2004; Sleeter, 2011). Relationships are at the core of understanding the students in front of the faculty in the classroom. The literature also stated that one of the most effective culturally relevant pedagogical strategies was when the faculty engaged their students in activities that supported interactions with another culture in order to change their attitude towards that culture (Allen & Boykin, 1992; Bertalan, 2003).

Finally, the main purpose of culturally relevant pedagogy is not only academic in nature, but also rooted in relationships and change (Irvine, 2009). Faculty and staff support and challenge students to understand and listen to multiple perspectives, but to also initiate change to the society in which we live. Promoting justice on campus addresses racial inequities, gender inequities, and classism. Pretending these issues do not exist or to ignore them does not challenge students to think critically and fails to prepare them for life beyond their degree.

While culturally relevant pedagogy offers an outline to support marginalized ethnic and racial student identities, there are some areas of concern that institutions must be aware of as they lay plans to infuse new curriculum and teaching practices into the classroom. Sleeter (2011) named that the social order of a majority white institution will be disrupted by introducing culturally relevant pedagogy and the leadership should be grounded in their mission and vision if political and other backlash comes into play. Some missed opportunities for administration are ignoring race, calling for cultural

celebration and ignoring the important marriage of this with academic development, circumventing the idea that students are individuals, and avoiding a deep-dive into faculty reflections upon their ability to flexibly deliver curriculum and instruction as student identities change at predominantly white institutions.

Professional Development

Institutions should review their roles as disruptors towards equity or upholders of the norm in education, as well as ground important conversations around race, which are at the heart of culturally relevant pedagogy. If higher education wishes to tackle some of the deeply rooted instructional practices that are geared towards white males, faculty and staff should first undergo trainings, such as Courageous Conversations, with race at the forefront of all conversations. Singleton (2015) voiced that these types of conversations can be uncomfortable for white people who have never had to speak about race with others. There may be non-closure to the discussion around complex racial issues, but at the heart of the conversation is listening to understand others. Otherwise the issues at hand run the risk of becoming derailed and faculty and staff are likely to shift focus on to more comfortable topics such as gender or make arguments towards following a color-blind approach (McIntosh, 2005; Vacarr, 2001).

Howard-Hamilton (2000) concluded that any institution should begin the work with faculty reviewing their own identities and belief systems before implementing new pedagogical thought. Darling-Hammond (1997) guided this thought process by reviewing a democratic discourse for everyone, providing a space and a place for multiple perspectives. At stake is the groundwork for validation and respect amongst the faculty and staff. In addition, every faculty and staff member need to meet the needs of

the students on campus. As stated in the previous chapter outlining the institutional study, this student population is quickly changing.

New faculty members would have training in culturally relevant pedagogy in the onboarding process. This could include reflection upon current beliefs (Castro, 2010; Durden & Truscott, 2013), curriculum and instruction, and the Courageous Conversations model could be embedded within the first few years of being a part of the institution. Planning for culturally relevant pedagogy, which mirrors the current students in the institution, is not just about the activities, assessments, and discussions, but also includes the thought process and critical connection of the instructor. The process allows for the faculty member to link the what and the how of the instructional loop and avoids a prescribed program that does not meet students' needs (Cochran-Smith, Davis, and Fries 2004; Wei, 2002).

In order to design curriculum and instruction that meets students' needs, faculty need time to meet in order to create a plan with structured support. Leaders around culturally relevant pedagogy do not only need to stem from administration in a top-down driven format, but from faculty within departments who are focused on equity. If there were faculty members who are already grounded in equity work, then leveraging their knowledge would be key, while administration may need to review the way in which their current systems operate (Alvarez, 2019). Who does the system uphold? Who does the system marginalize? How can the system change? These questions need to be answered amongst faculty think-partners who are willing to deconstruct these spaces and built their cultural knowledge about the students on campus. This group can also strategize as to addressing equity in the classroom and in developing culturally

responsive curriculum. This process takes time, which should be allocated throughout the year by administration.

A majority of faculty in higher education is white, with a total of 53% full-time and 47% part-time in degree-granting post-secondary institutions. If we break this down further, 41% of faculty are white males, 35% are white females, 6% are Asian/Pacific Islander males, 4% are Asian/Pacific Islander females, 3% are Black males, 3% are Black females, 3% are Hispanic males, and 2% are Hispanic females (NCES, 2016). What faculty believes about racial and ethnic identity shows up in the classroom (Gay & Kirkland, 2003). Ladson Billings (1995) suggested that the instructor should first examine what influences outside of the classroom occurred, the why, and then move to the what, which is classroom practice and teaching the students in front of the faculty member.

Castro (2010) recommended faculty move into reflective practice, including thinking deeply about their beliefs and how they are demonstrated in the classroom. This also encompasses the idea that all students have the ability to learn, to construct deep thought processes, and that diversity adds important perspective to the learning environment (Paris, 2012). As culturally relevant pedagogy is based on students' cultural, linguistic, and personal experiences, faculty must do more than know their students, but must also reflect on their own bias and ability to meet every students' needs. Faculty must be able to support the complexity of the classroom; the languages, the cultures, both marginalized cultures, and the dominant culture (Beauboeuf-LaFontant, 1999).

Equity and Inclusion

Au (2009) posited that culturally relevant pedagogy is under the guise of best practices. Essentially the faculty member is providing each student with what they need to succeed, which truly supports an inclusive classroom, along with access to an equitable academic curriculum. A focus on values of collaboration, well-being, and success of the group, rather than the individual, is at the forefront. The faculty and staff must be aware of the social constructs of educational institutions and the inequities that currently exist. If this is the definition of culturally relevant pedagogy, then the answer must be that it is part of all faculty trainings to ensure best practices in the classroom for every student.

A positive belief system for all students and for all departments in a college or university needs to be in place. Students' cultural values are an additive model for the institution and make the campus more inclusive (Scherff & Spector, 2011). In addition, the faculty supports culturally relevant pedagogy by upholding the belief that all students can learn. The learning is connected to everyday life and realities, extending students' own belief systems. Lastly, the faculty commit to developing students' critical awareness of all individuals on campus and in society. Again, the faculty and staff must be reflective upon their own belief systems to build an institution that challenges what is currently in place.

Challenges

The sections prior mentioned few challenges, which could be blind spots in the current literature and research pertaining to first-generation Latinx students. There is also the aforementioned difficulty in leveraging full-time and part-time faculty to come to professional development based on the time needed and required attendance. Lastly,

higher education still underrepresents marginalized populations in their faculty and staff. This is true for Marquette University, with a faculty of 82.5% who identify as white and a staff of 76.7% who identify as white (MU, 2018). The next section will discuss the lack of models in existence for implementing culturally relevant pedagogy in higher education (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002; Lee, 2002; Pottshoff, Dinsmore, & Moore, 2001).

The limitations in the literature around culturally relevant pedagogy are another reason for this study. Aronson and Laughter (2015) reviewed over 40 studies connected with the classroom and only two of them utilized assessment data before and after gauging student-learning outcomes with the perceived intervention of culturally relevant activities and pedagogy. In the research, student-learning outcomes are gauged almost exclusively from the teacher's or researcher's point of view, rather from the students' perspectives. The student voice is needed in this type of research, especially in connection to relationships and sense of belonging. Lastly, the published studies almost exclusively focus on homogenous, Black classroom experiences (Morrison et al., 2008). There is a severe limitation on heterogeneous groups and on Latinx student experiences. Breaking this group within the current research to first-generation Latinx students is even more restricted.

While touting culturally relevant pedagogy and being responsive to students' needs, it is also important to examine the challenges and some failures that institutions have experienced in the name of equity and inclusion. One mindset comes from a deficit approach in looking at students of color as needing to "catch up" to the white institutional norms that have been upheld for as long as the history of higher education in the United States (Schmeichel, 2012). The perspective of students' differences in culture and

changing the curriculum to close perceived academic deficits did not achieve the intended consequences. These steps should be avoided in formulating a curriculum around culturally relevant pedagogy and in developing faculty and staff.

Another path to avoid for any higher education institution would be to have faculty and staff undergo training that pointed to understanding a culture, only to reinforce stereotypes that further traumatized marginalized students (Villegas, 1988). If professional development centers on culturally differences, it has the ability to push a further divide between students and faculty, who are studying students from an anthropological standpoint. For example, the differences between first-generation Latinx students can be varied; students may have a strongly-developed racial and ethnic identity, students may or may not use Spanish as their preferred language, and students from different Spanish-speaking countries may have different needs on campus. If an institution is to support the students on their campus, they must extend themselves beyond understanding cultural differences and looking to fit students into an institutional mold (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Students should be able to flourish, maintain their intersecting identities, and enjoy academic success.

Conclusion

After reviewing the literature on ethnic and racial identity and student development, the classic theories are now considered as a basis to apply critical race theory (CRT), or to use intersectionality of racial and ethnic identity to understand the development of Latinx students in higher education. Although most literature posited additional conceptualizations, the following parts of critical race theory (Yosso, 2003) are commonly agreed upon: racism is a common experience for People of Color in the

United States, the racial hierarchy serves important functions of distribution of psychological resources, and different racial and ethnic intersections of identities provide a diversity of experiences and perspectives.

When applying these theories to higher education and curriculum and instruction, it is important for institutions to continue to search for ways to support the growing number of first-generation Latinx students on their campuses. Culturally relevant pedagogy values the individual and forming relationships with students over any particular strategy. The literature is limited and does point to a crosswalk of experiencing culturally relevant pedagogy and personally connecting to the institution. Lastly, the professional development of each faculty and staff member can be leveraged by reflecting upon their beliefs about students before engaging in revising curriculum and course learning outcomes that are culturally relevant.

The following chapter will discuss the methodology of the research question around first-generation Latinx students, their experiences with culturally relevant pedagogy in their undergraduate courses at MU, and how the students' sense of belonging is impacted on campus. As the number of Latinx students attending a post-secondary education increases, including first-generation students, it is important for institutions such as MU to support students in an inclusive manner. MU has many opportunities in the future to include professional development to faculty and staff, to review curriculum to be more culturally relevant, and to engage in ways to have conversations about how race impacts the current educational system. As MU continues on the pathway to become a Hispanic-serving institution, a plan should be in place to make needed shifts to meet students' needs.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study is to ascertain how first-generation Latinx students' sense of belonging is impacted by culturally relevant pedagogy at Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. This chapter lays out the methods and the procedures used to research this topic. Included is an outline of the purpose of the research, the research questions, the research design and rationale, the researcher's role, and ensuring confidentiality. The study and protocol application, the selection of participants, data collection, establishing trustworthiness, data analysis, and summary of the research sections are a part of this research design. The outlined research design information of this study is the main portion of this chapter.

Problem Statement

First-generation Latinx students at predominately white higher education institutions have not met the same outcomes as their white peers, using retention and degrees-conferred as the two main data points that post-secondary institutions benchmark. Sense of belonging is defined as whether or not a student feels respected, valued, accepted, cared for, included, or that they matter on the college campus (Strayhorn, 2012). Sense of belonging can attribute to first-generation Latinx students feeling success, persevering in their education, and ultimately graduating from an institution (Hurtado & Carter, 1997). Many aspects of a Jesuit, Catholic, majority white institution and sense of belonging for the Latinx students were assessed in this qualitative study. The participants' perspective of their academic experiences, particularly if they engaged in a course grounded in culturally relevant pedagogy. These experiences can

have a profound impact on first-generation Latinx students' sense of belonging, their academic success, and their degree completion rates (Hurtado & Kamimura, 2003).

Research about first-generation Latinx students is often generalized around all first-generation students from many different racial and ethnic identities and educational backgrounds, or the research is centered on all students from historically marginalized populations. Scholarly research over the past decade around Latinx students at Hispanic serving institutions (HSIs) has increased, specifically towards the question of how the university serves its Latinx students. This study seeks to extend the current research to include first-generation Latinx students who attend a four-year private Catholic Jesuit university.

A qualitative methods research process highlights the impact of the culturally relevant pedagogy on first-generation Latinx students' sense of belonging at an emerging Hispanic serving institution (HSI). Latinx students at Marquette University (MU), a four-year private, Catholic Jesuit university, located in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, are a majority traditional-aged student group. MU is on the pathway to becoming an HSI by increasing their Latinx student population to 25% within the next five years. In this study, a significant sample size was met, with 11 students and four faculty members participating. There are currently 11,600 undergraduate students at MU, with 12% of the student population identifying as Latinx (MU, n.d.).

Overview and Rationale of Qualitative Research Design

This study was conducted with a qualitative method plan for evidence and data collection. Qualitative research seeks to interpret the world around us through practices, such as interviews, recordings, and photographs (Denzin, 2001). Through a

phenomenological lens, the researcher observes and gains an understanding of a phenomena, in this case with a group of first-generation Latinx students in higher education. While this research began with some assumptions, the intent was to study a group of 10 to 15 first-generation Latinx students in their natural setting, an important element of qualitative research, and to allow their narrative speak to their personal experiences at a predominantly white institution.

The qualitative methods approach was selected as the study proposes to observe and interview students at MU directly and to hear their narratives and experiences on campus. Through a deeper understanding of students on MU's campus, generalized findings were narrowed and personalized (Creswell & Poth, 2018). First-generation Latinx students related their own stories and truths of how culturally relevant pedagogy connected them to the campus. Through a series of pre-populated questions, the researcher interpreted themes from the collective group and offers findings for future research and examination. There was a space for participants to share their experiences and to add further questions for future participants, but the protocol remained the same for each interview.

It is important to highlight that context matters in that the researcher attempted to understand a holistic experience while listening to the stories of each individual student. Within a transformative framework, a phenomenological approach considered the student and their own experience, which provided valuable insight rather than focusing on theory (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The transformative framework also pursued comprehension of the first-generation Latinx individual student's sense of belonging within the larger

context of MU's campus and academic course offerings and signals for change to occur moving forward in the leadership's approach to developing an inclusive campus.

Purpose

The qualitative methods research process highlighted the impact of culturally relevant pedagogy on first-generation Latinx students' sense of belonging at MU, an emerging Hispanic serving institution (HSI). First-generation Latinx students on MU's campus in the heart of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, are a majority traditional-aged student group and the total Latinx population is increasing as part of the strategic plan crafted in 2013 (MU, 2013). As MU is on the pathway to becoming an HSI by increasing their Latinx student population to 25% within the next five years, gathering data in a variety of ways to study if MU is meeting not on the KPIs, but also the students' needs, is a priority. There are currently 11,600 undergraduate students at MU, with 12% of the student population identifying as Latinx (MU, n.d.).

The literature review focused on the impact on sense of belonging and culturally relevant pedagogy, students had a connection with others, including faculty and staff, and experienced close, meaningful relationships. There was a lack of feeling pressured by differences between the majority white culture and their own Latinx identity. These connections led to other social and academic outcomes, such as student satisfaction, motivation to study, and ultimately influenced the students to continue their college education. The study serves as a means to understand first-generation Latinx students' experiences and honors them through interviews, recognizing the individual nature of those experiences.

Research Questions

The question for this study is to understand the ways in which the culturally relevant experiences offered by faculty at Marquette University (MU) contribute to Latinx students' sense of belonging. Student sense of belonging is defined in the literature by the students' interactions in the social systems and their actual psychological sense of identification and integration with the community (Spady, 1971; Tinto, 1987, 1993).

To explore the sense of belonging for first-generation Latinx students at Marquette University, the following questions were posed:

1. What role, if any, does culturally relevant pedagogy play in first-generation Latinx students' sense of belonging at MU?
2. To what extent does this impact the students' feeling that MU is a "home"?
3. What role, if any, do non-academic experiences play in first-generation Latinx students' sense of belonging at MU?

This research is necessary for MU to understand as the institution moves forward towards becoming an HSI, admitting more Latinx students and more first-generation students than ever in the history of the institution. While there is literature that exists around culturally relevant pedagogy and sense of belonging in higher education, to focus specifically on a predominantly white, private Jesuit institution and students' experiences, more research is required in order to ensure that the mission of MU can be fully fostered, along with the hearts and minds of each student on campus.

Rationale for Study Replication

The study used similar questions in the interviews generated from The Psychological Sense of School Membership (PSSM) Scale. This scale has been used in many research studies about sense of belonging in higher education (Pittman & Richmond, 2008). The questions were adapted for an interview with students enrolled or formerly enrolled in courses supported by culturally relevant pedagogy and for Marquette University, a four-year Jesuit Catholic university. This study seeks to further knowledge and understanding around the Latinx higher education experience for first-generation students.

Role of the Researcher

The research process that I followed connected the ways in which culturally relevant pedagogy contributes to Latinx students' sense of belonging. I am a white, heterosexual female from the suburbs of Chicago. I was raised Catholic and I attended Catholic secondary school. My stepfather is from Mexico and I have lived abroad for several years, speaking Spanish at near-native proficiency. The work that I have been committed to in my 22 years in education has been mainly around Latinx students, both newly arrived to the United States and first-generation college attendees, and building in college-readiness skills for that same group of students. Transitioning this work and applying it to higher education was the logical next step for me. I needed to remind myself that my ontological assumptions about this topic could impact the perspectives, the research design, and the way in which I shared and dissected the students' narratives. I needed to remain open to hear other perspectives that I had not yet considered.

I am not Latinx and I have not lived the same marginalized educational experiences as some of my students or members of my family. I have spent time changing my own educational model to fit individuals over just finding a one-size fits all solution. The Latinx identity has multiple intersectionality included and in education we have largely excluded the intersectionality and focused on one generalized label. I have evolved my own classroom to incorporate relationships and to place individualized learning at the forefront, while knowing my students and the value that each and every one of them brings to the collective community. All of these cumulative experiences helped inform me of my research path, but also served as a reminder that I was and will continue to be an outsider to the space and to the students that I studied.

While completing the institutional study in the first chapter, I learned that Marquette University (MU) is in route to being designated a Hispanic serving institution (HSI), which signifies that they will increase their current Latinx undergraduate enrollment to 25%. The first-generation Latinx student experience in higher education is completely different from mine: I attended a large public 4-year research institution that was isolated from a big city and had a low percentage of historically marginalized students, while the students in the study attend a private, Jesuit Catholic four-year university, that has made a concerted effort to recruit Latinx students, evident in the strategic enrollment initiative to meet their goals. The current leadership has taken steps toward a more inclusive campus, including the creation of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion.

Through my work as an administrator, supporting instructors around curriculum and instruction, I am driven by John Hattie's (2012) work on visible learning and the theories and practices around culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings et al). Both have stated that sense of belonging and relationships are at the heart of connecting with students. This research is transformational in nature and will provide leadership with some recommendations on how to not only matriculate students, to retain them and move them towards becoming degree-seeking candidates, but also to ensure that the students feel that MU is a place of comfort and belonging. Additionally, the work of any educator is to continue to seek out opportunities to break down systematic racial barriers for students in the name of equity and ensure that higher education institutions offer diverse and inclusive campuses.

Participant Selection

The participants in the research are current first-generation Latinx students, who attended courses with culturally relevant pedagogical experiences at MU's campus. The courses have been identified through the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and the researcher partnered with faculty on learning about professional development focused on class instruction. Since a majority of students are both traditional-age and enrolled in traditional face-to-face classes (MU, n.d.) there was less of a challenge to seek out a group of participants. The researcher thought about requesting a list of students from the Registrar of all enrolled self-identified first-generation Latinx students, which would have provided the researcher with an e-mail list to send an invitation to participate in the study. However, the efforts focused on the already established Office of Diversity and Inclusion as a hub and from which the researcher recruited both students and faculty.

The researcher targeted a variety of ages between 18-23, a variety of intersecting identities within the first-generation Latinx label, and a variety of experiences. There was a second group of recruited faculty members, who had already implemented culturally relevant pedagogy in their classes. Criterion sampling, while a sample size was not needed, allowed the researcher to collect data on a similar phenomenon, culturally relevant pedagogy (Creswell & Poth, 2018). However, the researcher understands that the participants had diverse perspectives around sense of belonging depending upon their backgrounds and their experiences on MU's campus. In meeting with the volunteer participants, the researcher explained the importance of the study, the criteria for participants, including the availability needed for an individual interview. Lastly, the researcher shared the schedule for interviews, working around the students' schedules, and the informed consent form.

Setting of the Study

The study was conducted at a four-year, Jesuit, Catholic university in an urban setting, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. An urban area typically has more than 50,000 people living in the same zone (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). MU (n.d.) has over 11,000 undergraduate and graduate students attending this past year. First-generation student enrollment is around 20%, with 12% of undergraduate students identifying as Latinx.

Data Collection and Measures

The data collection measures were based on a qualitative study with a methodology grounded in phenomenology. This approach called for an organization of data files and reading through text to find common ground between the researcher's notes. Next, the researcher created codes from common themes in the interviews through

epoche bracketing and describing personal experiences of students. Lastly, the grouping and developing important themes and statements that represented the essence of the phenomenon summarized the results (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The interviews had planned questions and follow-up questions with space for comments and additional questioning to occur at the end. The participant read the interview guide, with questions, while the researcher explained the instructions of the interview process. The researcher conducted the interview, recorded the interview via computer, and transcribed the interviews. The transcription was shared with the participants upon completion in a timely manner.

Role of the Interviewer

The researcher planned, collected data, analyzed the information, reflected, and made a finding based on the research questions. While the researcher has biases based on their own background and experiences, the first-generation Latinx students also had differences demonstrated amongst themselves, carrying many different intersecting identities. There were a few issues that arose throughout the process that could have been problematic. However, Creswell and Poth (2018) recommend that the researcher follow criteria for highly ethical standards, including protecting the participant, presenting the truth, and being transparent with all communication.

Reflection is an ongoing step within the research process (Moutsakas, 1994) that the researcher used to think about next steps and if there is something missing from the data collection model. The researcher listened deeply and attentively to the participants, who are the experts of their own lived experiences. While the researcher is an outsider to

MU and to the students, attempts at putting the participants at ease and maintaining confidentiality allowed for more honest and robust answers.

Script for Interviews

I will use this introduction with each interview to remain consistent.

Welcome. I appreciate your participation in this study. I am a doctoral student at National Louis University of Chicago. The area of my study focuses on Latinx student experiences at Marquette University. I am reviewing courses that embed culturally relevant pedagogy relative to the impact they have on first-generation Latinx students' sense of belonging at an emerging Hispanic Serving Institution (I). MU is on the pathway to becoming an I by increasing their Latinx student population to 25% within the next five years.

I thank you for agreeing to be a part of this process and for allowing me to interview you. In a minute, I will begin with some questions, I will pause to hear your answers, and I will record our conversation. There are no right or wrong answers, as they are your lived experiences. These conversations are also confidential and will only be used within my research study. I will not directly quote you or use your name in any way. Please be open and honest about your opinions, attitudes, and experience, as they will help shape my research moving forward. Once the conversation starts, you may get up, walk around, or whatever else makes you comfortable while you are speaking. If you need anything during the interview, please let me know.

Interview Questions

Tell me about your general experience at Marquette University (MU).

Does Marquette University feel like home?

How?

How do Latinx students perceive the campus climate at MU?

How do Latinx students perceive their experience outside of their academic classes (ex: community, residence life, etc.)?

To what extent have you use experienced culturally relevant pedagogy in your courses?

- Which courses?
- How did you feel about the course?
- How did the course impact you?
- What advice do you have for the faculty at MU?

Have you made friends at MU?

- Through which experiences?
- Classes?
- Organizations?

How have the faculty and staff impacted your experience at MU?

- Who specifically?
- A specific course?
- A specific experience?

Are you satisfied with your student experience at MU?

- What could MU do to ensure that all students are connected to the campus?

What other questions may be relevant to future participants? What else should I consider asking in the future?

End of Interview

Thank you for participating in the interview and this research study. I will transcribe this interview and can meet in the near future to share it with you to ensure what was stated today is correct. I appreciate your time.

Confidentiality

In the interview process and during the data analysis, confidentiality and ensuring the students' voices are protected is always a priority. Respecting a participants' inability to be a part of the interview or to sign consent forms can be a part of the process (Creswell & Poth, 2018). While the researcher stated up front that the interview is confidential and that the students' name will not be revealed in the final summary of the research, allowing for the participant to read their transcript is an additional assurance. Also, keeping to the script of the introduction and the questions gave fidelity to the research process. During the analysis of the data, all communication will remain direct, clear, and appropriate. Spending time with the participants, as much as possible, and being present on MU's campus allowed for the researcher to present multiple perspectives around the first-generation Latinx student experience.

Data Analysis

A phenomenological approach to research with a transformative framework was chosen because its highlighted areas of concern for first-generation Latinx students on MU's campus and gives possible recommendations for moving forward. Pryczak and Bruce (2014) suggested that a summary of how the studies were conducted and being transparent of any flaws in the studies in order to positively impact the reliability and validity of the research. Also, sharing the qualitative, narrative transcript with the

students and to another researcher helped identify any inconsistencies prior to analyzing the information. The researcher decided upon reliability and validity in tandem with the previously stated epistemological, ontological, and theoretical frameworks (Yilmaz, 2013).

Using the Moustakas (1994) modification of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method provided a straightforward approach to the research. The process began with a description of the students' experiences with culturally relevant pedagogy. By beginning with the student experience, the researcher was able to differentiate from their own personal experience as a student, leading to the focus of the individual participants of the study. In using epoche bracketing, the researcher moved away from their own view of higher education and reviewed the experience of the first-generation Latinx students. While this type of phenomenology can be challenging to achieve, the researcher labored to observe the phenomena and based their findings on the perspectives of the students and the faculty members.

After the interviews were finalized, the researcher created a list of common elements in the interviews, or significant statements that could be grouped. This was achieved by using the MAXQDA 2020 software after downloading all transcripts. All of the statements had equal worth before reviewing the interview transcripts a second or third time. As the statements were grouped into larger swaths of information, they formed common themes that were interpreted within the context of the students' experiences. Next, the "what" and the "how" of the students' experiences were described. Lastly, a more complete picture of the textural and structural descriptions of the phenomenon was summarized.

The next step was to review the themes through selective coding, or telling the students' story. As stated previously, a Latinx student can sometimes be labeled within one group or lived experience, while they may be a part of multiple intersecting identities. Then, analyzing the student interviews within the context of the themes, the researcher was able to fill in the blanks of the students' and faculty members' narratives. The analysis moved further with the phenomenology framework, which allowed for knowledge construction of the first-generation Latinx student experience at a predominantly White campus. This approach was collaborative and sought to learn from the students as the experts (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The next chapter will describe in detail the findings after reviewing the emerged themes from the research study.

Delimitations

The delimitations to the study were to ensure that the research could be completed as a non-employee of the institution, if the interview could reveal the connection between sense of belonging and culturally relevant pedagogy, and if honest answers were submitted on the part of the student and faculty participants, who were unknown prior to the research study. Additional delimitations could be the actual interview questions and not providing time for the researcher to continually reflect and adjust throughout the research process.

Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore how first-generation Latinx students perceive the experience of courses that include culturally relevant pedagogy and the impact it had on their sense of belonging. This chapter described the methods, the outline of the research process and the procedures that were used in the study. The

chapter was organized by the overview of the problem, the qualitative research design, the purpose of the research, the research questions, the research design and rationale, the researcher's role, the confidentiality of the participants, the outline and protocol of the interview, the site of the research, the participant selection process, data collection, establishment of trustworthiness, data analysis, and a summary of the groundwork that was accomplished prior to beginning the data collection with the participants. The next chapter will reveal the results of the study and detail the analysis of the findings.

Chapter Four: Data Analysis and Findings

Introduction

This chapter will present the results of the qualitative research inquiry around the impact of culturally relevant pedagogy (Hammond, 2015) and first-generation Latinx student sense of belonging (Hurtado & Carter, 1997) in higher education. The chapter is divided into two sections; one section speaks to the findings and overall themes of the student interviews and the other section around the faculty interviews. The overall chapter will break down the findings with an analysis of the qualitative data. The findings are organized phenomenologically around the themes that emerged from the qualitative data analysis.

The interviews included student and faculty participants that averaged 45 minutes in length. All interviews took place on campus at Marquette University. The experiences and narratives of all participants offered insight to the research questions posed in this study. Upon analysis, the participants imparted new insight to the research around culturally relevant pedagogy and student sense of belonging and which courses, faculty members, and campus experiences presented the students with support in making Marquette University's campus feel like home. The researcher conducted all interviews that are presented in this research study. In order to facilitate and support the use of transparency and consistency, the interviews followed a specific along with the use of an informed consent form for students and faculty (see Appendices A and B).

Interviews and Demographics

The student interviews took place on MU's campus and were advertised via a flyer (see Appendix D). The communication on the flyer stated the purpose of the research as well as key attributes for participants; a current MU student, a minimum of 18 years old, are a first-generation college student, and identify as Latinx. The researcher's e-mail address and a QR code were attached to the flyer, which sent the candidate directly to a link to sign up to participate. There was an e-mail sent to possible faculty candidates that outlined the key attributes as a candidate who had used culturally-relevant pedagogy in their classes.

There were 11 students in the qualitative study, with all of the students identifying as Latinx and all are considered first-generation college attendees, according to the definition presiding at MU. There is a mix of freshmen, sophomores, juniors, seniors, and fifth year students included in the study. Ten of the 11 students began their post-secondary education at MU, with one student transferring from another school to MU. Of the four faculty interviews, only one faculty member is in a tenured-track position. Three of the four faculty interviews are adjunct-faculty members at Marquette University.

The voluntary participants, both students and faculty members, who were interviewed demonstrated a wide variety of perspectives around the topic of culturally relevant pedagogy and the impact it had on their sense of belonging. The themes that emerged from the students are presented in upcoming sections of this chapter. Participants were recorded on an iPad or iPhone, which allowed for convenient transcriptions. The recordings were uploaded to Temi.com and were directly transcribed. Each interview was transcribed within a few days, after which participants were given the

opportunity to review, change, and verify their comments. The total interview times varied and were scheduled at times that were convenient to the participant during the regular campus school week. All interviews were conducted during the month of March of 2020. The researcher took notes, too, during each interview, which were also shared with the participants for transparency.

All transcripts were uploaded from Temi.com to the program MAXQDA 2020. From there, the researcher coded the transcripts with a mix of epoch bracketing and selective coding, which allowed for the researcher to prioritize a category and related other categories to that main category (Creswell & Poth, 2018). After following this process, themes emerged on the part of the student and faculty participants. The emergent themes were then reviewed under the original research questions presented in the interviews. The results will be organized into themes, outlined with the questions from the interview, and explained in the upcoming sections of this chapter.

Interview Protocol

The interview protocols included a purpose of the study and a definition of culturally relevant pedagogy as “recognizing the importance of including students’ cultural references in all aspects of learning” (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Characteristics of culturally responsive teaching were also shared in the interview protocol; student-centered, culturally mediated instruction, building individual student to faculty relationships, and learning concentrated within the context of culture. The researcher read the protocol verbatim to each participant, but also ensured that everyone was comfortable before beginning the interview. The researcher also electronically shared the protocol with each of the 11 student participants and the four faculty participants. The

researcher asked if there were any questions prior to beginning the interviews with each participant, to which there were no responses. Defining culturally relevant pedagogy for both student and faculty participants helped set the tone and focus the interview.

All of the interview questions were asked verbatim and in the same order to ensure consistency within the research study. There were times, however, when the participant stated something that was new, with which the researcher asked a follow up question or to ask the participant to elaborate on their answer. The researcher did not add any questions to the interview protocol, but did allow for every participant to add questions that could be relevant to another participant. The majority of questions were considered, but were ultimately additional research studies or sub-topics under culturally relevant pedagogy. These interviews offered the researcher detailed qualitative data for understanding the participants' experiences.

Research Questions

Three primary research questions guided this study:

1. What role, if any, does culturally relevant pedagogy play in first-generation Latinx students' sense of belonging at MU?
2. To what extent does culturally relevant pedagogy impact the students' feeling that MU is a "home" base?
3. What role, if any, do non-academic experiences play in first-generation Latinx students' sense of belonging at MU?

Research Study Results

There were themes that emerged from the research data. The major themes from the results of this study included:

1. **Students' sense of belonging** was positively impacted when they experienced **culturally-relevant pedagogy** in their academic courses.
2. The **intersection of students' identities** played a part in the way they felt at home at Marquette University.
3. Students were generally **satisfied with their overall experience** at MU, but did not consider the campus "home".
4. **Experiences outside of student academic courses had a major impact** on first-generation Latinx student sense of belonging on a majority White campus.

Theme 1 answered the first research question, "*What role, if any, does culturally relevant pedagogy play in first-generation Latinx students' sense of belonging at MU?*"

Theme 2 and 3 answered the second research question, "*To what extent does culturally relevant pedagogy impact the students' feeling that MU is a "home" base?*" Finally

Theme 4 addressed the third research question, "*What role, if any, do non-academic experiences play in first-generation Latinx students' sense of belonging at MU?*" In later sections, each theme is discussed with more detail, including sub-themes that emerged after analysis of the research.

The impact of the literature and beliefs of the researcher was upheld by the student participants. The researcher had hypothesized in previous chapters about the high leveraged practice of relationship building in culturally relevant pedagogy, which was highlighted by the student narratives and emergent in the themes. However, there were many aspects of student life in higher education that the researcher had not considered, such as social justice experiences that also supported first-generation Latinx student sense

of belonging on a private, Jesuit college campus. These findings will be expounded upon and connected with the findings of the research study.

Theme 1: Student Sense of Belonging and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

The students were asked to respond to their own experiences at MU in classes and the rate to which they felt their own identity was reflected in the classroom experience with MU faculty.

Specific courses. While student participants named specific courses, most of these were housed within the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Communication, and the College of Education. Some of the courses naturally lent themselves to interpersonal communication and responsiveness to the individual student's identity (Stembridge, 2020). While other courses allowed for students to explore their identities and to bring their own cultural references into the learning space created by the faculty member (Yosso, 2006). Ten of the 11 student participants stated that the core curriculum classes had fewer culturally relevant experiences than when they took coursework towards their major, minor, or outside elective courses.

Negative experiences. The named negative experiences by students were mainly around a disconnect between the faculty member and the student. This could have been created by a variety of issues, but is by no means just part of the courses or just the part of the faculty member. Class size had a direct effect on the student and the negative experience. Also, if a student was called on to speak for an entire group of their ethnic or racial identity, this had an extreme negative impact on the student. One participant mentioned that while they were first-generation Latinx, their family was from Mexico and another student was from Puerto Rico. Their two lived experiences both at home and

in their education have had very different paths. Therefore, neither student should have been asked to speak to the “Latinx” perspective on the topic, but rather both had contributions that would have given depth to the entire Latinx label in and of itself. All eleven students who participated in the research study reported that they had at least one, if not multiple, negative experiences in the core curriculum classes. Four of the eleven stated that they had some positive experiences in the core curriculum classes around culturally relevant pedagogy.

Relationships with faculty. Participants related events between specific faculty members and a feeling of comfort with them to seek out academic support. A majority of student participants related very personal narratives around faculty members who positively intervened in their pathway during a course and even outside of the course experience. Ten of the 11 participants detailed positive experiences with a Latinx faculty member on campus, but only five of the eleven participants had a classroom experience with a Latinx faculty member. When first-generation Latinx students had a faculty member who had a similar ethnic or racial identity to theirs in the classroom, there was an additional level of comfort and ability to participate in the class without feeling like they were pressured into speaking for an entire racial or ethnic group.

Classroom environment. Student participants spoke to the way the classroom environment made them feel, whether it was a level of comfort or a level of discomfort. There were mentions of complete disconnect to the content of the course or dropping courses, too, when students did not feel at ease upon entering the classroom. Gay (2000) stated that the level of engagement in the classroom and students’ experiences are directly connected, especially if they are joined with a faculty member who has reflected

upon their own social and cultural identities. Ten of the 11 participants narrated a positive feeling and a negative feeling about the classroom environment. In tandem with the faculty participant findings, the student participants stated that the faculty controlled the environment and that there was a positive effect on the learning in and out of the physical classroom when students felt comfortable.

Theme 2 and 3: Student Identities and Sense of Belonging

Minority students on majority white campuses reflect that their campus climates are more racist and less accepting than their white peers (Jones, Castellanos, & Cole, 2002). In the same regard, Hurtado and Carter (1997) highlighted that the perceptions of racial hostility had negative effects on Latinx student sense of belonging or feeling at home on campus. The student participants interviewed in this research process supported this finding. For example, student 5 lived on campus their first year and felt that it was welcoming because they lived on a floor with many students of color. When they visited a different floor in the dorm building, they found that almost all of the students were white and they did not feel a sense of welcoming. Although they stated there was no worry about this particular fact, they avoided visiting this floor for the rest of the year and instead welcomed students to visit their own, more welcoming floor.

Intersecting identities. Student identities and the relationship they had with those identities impacted their answer to MU being considered “home”. One student narrated that they considered themselves American, Latinx, Queer, and Mexican. This student also noted that navigating these different emerging identities within the context of a majority White campus did not allow for them to fully consider MU’s campus a home. The literature supported this finding as students are comfortable in an environment where

they don't have to worry about being judged or feel as an outsider. Students have the most engagement with spaces that are strongly connected to the social realities and constructions of themselves (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000). While all eleven student participants did find spaces of belonging, the upperclassmen reported that many of these connections were not until after the first year or two at MU.

Only one student participant commented that their own identity did not center around their parents' identity, which is Mexican-American. This student had mostly White friends on campus and had experiences at MU that did not connect with their ethnic or racial heritage. They narrated that they were an anomaly in grouping themselves with mostly White students. They observed that most Latinx students on campus grouped together and did not, in their opinion, connect with other White students. The student mentioned that there were Latinx peers who joined fraternities and sororities, but did not become a member of other student groups. Even though the student did explain that the campus was trying to be inclusive, that the campus was, in fact, as exclusive as any other setting they had experienced in education. Having said this, this student participant considered MU home and has looked at ways to remain on campus with possible job opportunities in the near future with MU.

A personal space. Students who live on campus, away from home, often find a place that speaks to their intersecting identities (Jones et al., 2002; Torres, 2003), including cultural centers. The Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) at MU is cited in ten of the eleven participant interviews as spaces where students had provided support systems. They had multiple functions on top of support, such as providing meeting spaces for various student groups, and a place to provide general student information.

Pierson (2009) stated that the community on campus can provide comfort and support to students who are away from their families.

There are many groups and events that meet and take place at the ODI on MU's campus, including Dreamer's (referring to undocumented students), non-binary Latinx students, anti-racism workshops, a natural hair expo, and a minority student leadership group. These groups and workshops, as mentioned by many participants, related to positive student engagement and a larger connection to MU. A community within a larger campus, especially for minority culture students, can provide students with the sense of belonging they need to feel at home. Participants shared their thoughts around a sense of belonging at MU related to the groups and workshops that they attended and of which they were members. Most of the participants involved in such groups also stated that they could connect with other members with the same identities and cultures.

Advisors of some of the mentioned groups were also highlighted as being major influences of students and their sense of belonging. Most participants could specifically state who the advisors were, how they gained support from them, and how they impacted them beyond the group membership. The advisors became more like family members and supported them beyond the group; some received internship connections, others have stated that they will find a job opportunity in Milwaukee and stay connected to the group and advisor, while other participants felt that they will remain in contact with the advisor well beyond graduation as a friend and family member.

Theme 4: Other Factors Contributing to Sense of Belonging

Participants emphasized in multiple narratives the effect that service-learning through MU's Office of Mission and Ministry had on their connection to the larger

campus. Being a Jesuit Catholic University, MU urges students to get involved in the larger community and even further afield in the United States. Three of the eleven first-generation Latinx students who mentioned attending mass, being involved in catholic-connected groups, and attending events that extend MU's mission of participating in service throughout the world (MU, n.d.). This narrated student involvement positively impacted the students and their ability to connect with other students and faculty at MU.

Living on campus. Campus living experiences did have an impact on the student participants. Six of the eleven participants had lived on or are currently living within the living learning communities established by MU (MU, n.d.). These communities are residential campus rooms with social justice initiatives or floors dedicated to multi-ethnic identities, like Nuestro Hogar or Global Villages. Nuestro Hogar is a space for Latinx students to come together and form a community through participating in events and activities on the Marquette campus. Global Village is a community based on the promotion of cultural sharing and personal growth. Five of the six participants who currently live in a living learning community had a sense of belonging within these spaces. One participant expressed how relaxed they were in their interactions with other students who look like them or have had similar past experiences.

Non-academic experiences. The experiences sponsored by the ODI had mixed participation, meaning that students had participated in experiences connected to other areas of the campus, including the Office of Mission and Ministry, more than experiences sponsored by the ODI. The mention of non-academic impacts on Latinx students' sense of belonging mirrors the literature review; students who had a connection outside of their classes had a positive overall view of the campus. While the participants did not name up

front that they felt a sense of belonging at MU, they all found non-academic areas of the campus that were linked to their areas of interest, such as social justice or volunteering experiences, which are also important parts of the Jesuit mission that MU intends to embed in the student experience.

Of the four themes that emerged from the student participant interviews, the thread between the two areas of academic and non-academic were faculty to student and student to student relationships. Participants mentioned that having relationships with faculty of color, who mirrored their own experience or had similar intersecting identities, as being one of the most impactful points on their sense of belonging. The other experiences that were non-academic connected Latinx students to mostly other Latinx students or students of color.

Discussion and Implications

While the research in the study was limited to 11 student participants and four faculty participants in the interview process, a true study would be extended to a more far-reaching student and faculty population. The pathway to becoming an HSI at MU has benchmarks and taking a true pulse of students and faculty could pave the way for more internal auditing of progress. It was interesting that even though the research questions had a main focus on the academic experiences of the students, the participants also mentioned other non-academic and academic areas of MU where they connected to their sense of belonging. The literature review reflected these same findings; that Latinx students have a variety of interests and pathways towards gaining a sense of belonging in higher education.

The recurring theme, also reflected in the literature around Latinx students' sense of belonging and in culturally relevant pedagogy, is that faculty relationships that impacted the Latinx participants in two areas, academic and non-academic. Two non-academic areas where the eleven student participants reported feeling a sense of belonging were experiences offered by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and the Office of Mission and Ministry (OMM) at MU. There was a campus group that one participant mentioned that included students who wanted to talk about social justice issues. Another student related their experience with the OMM and working with asylum seekers on the border of Mexico and Texas at a faith-based shelter with other MU students. These experiences are representative of the Jesuit educational experience and are deeply linked to MU's mission and vision of developing students and giving back to the community, but also the connection of non-academic areas that impacted a Latinx student's sense of belonging.

All of the participants commented that having faculty of color in the academic setting as being one of the most impactful experiences. The other experiences that were non-academic connected Latinx students to mostly other Latinx students or students of color. Developing strong relationships on campus has a strong implication with Latinx student belonging and persistence in their education (Cardoso & Thompson, 2010). Taking the time to reflect upon these preliminary findings, the themes, and the original question, spurred the creation of additional questions; how would these findings change if there were more participants, how would these findings change if the research study took place during the fall semester rather than the spring, and the relationships the students mentioned with students and faculty on MU's campus need more unpacking.

The students were asked to offer questions at the end of their interview that they thought would be of interest to future participants or to the research itself. Five of the eleven student participants added in a question at the end of the interview, with the other six participants choosing to end the interview without the supplementary question for the researcher. The researcher compiled the questions as a means to summarize them, as there were a few redundancies. While the researcher will not, at this time, add these questions into the planned interview as part of this particular research study, the questions could be shared with leadership at MU or they could be added into future research studies. The questions that were included by student participants at the end of the interview were:

How did the student arrive at deciding upon registering at MU? Including previous educational experiences?

What do students most enjoy about MU?

What do students know about the HSI pathway? Did that knowledge impact their decision to attend MU?

Recommendations from Student Participants

Student participants were asked to give recommendations to MU at the end of their interview to improve both the impact of culturally relevant pedagogy and the sense of belonging for first-generation Latinx students. While three of the eleven participants had been a part of a committee or group that sought out Latinx student perspectives, by either the ODI or perhaps a student leadership organization connected to the MU administration, none of the participants were part of a specific effort, or one that they

were aware of at the time of the interviews. The following recommendations were formulated from student participant responses.

- Reviewing core courses and the way in which students are looked at when needed to fill in a narrative or perspective.
- Offering more perspectives in major classes.
- Future students can and will be supported at MU, but they need to find their own space. Everyone is different.
- If the HSI initiative is to continue forward, more Latinx students and faculty should be on MU's campus.
- Leadership should review ways to integrate the students. There is a huge divide, perceived or otherwise, that separates the Latinx students and other students of Color and the White students at MU.

Faculty Findings

The next section will summarize the four faculty participants and the interviews around their personal experiences with culturally relevant pedagogy, all being directly related to how they supported students in a classroom at MU. Of the four faculty interviews, only one faculty member is in a tenured-track position. Three of the four faculty interviews are adjunct-faculty members at Marquette University. Three of the four faculty participants identified as a person of color with the fourth participant identifying as white. All of the four faculty participants have been at MU for at least two years and all of those years have been with directly teaching students in a traditional face-to-face class.

Of the four themes outlined at the beginning of the chapter; a positive impact on first-generation Latinx students' sense of belonging in the classroom that practiced culturally-relevant pedagogy and the major impact of non-academic experiences were the two themes that emerged from the faculty participant interviews. That is not to say that there weren't any mentions of the other two themes, the intersection of student identities and the overall satisfaction of their experience at MU, but that the campus was not considered "home", but there were not as many responses that included these themes. While they are discussed in the upcoming sections of the chapter, they are not highlighted.

General experiences. When the faculty members were asked about their general experiences at MU, two of the four participants mentioned that they were first-generation college graduates themselves. All four faculty members stated that they have had overall positive experiences at MU and within their specific departments. One of the four participants discussed feeling like their work was rewarding. Another participant felt that their Catholicism connected them to the Jesuit mission and vision of MU's campus. The other two participants specifically mentioned that they did not actively practice a religion, but were connected to the social justice mission that the Jesuit institution instilled in their students as a highlight to their experiences at MU.

Campus climate. The faculty participants were asked the following questions:

In your opinion, how do Latinx students perceive the campus climate at MU?

In your opinion, how do Latinx students perceive their experience outside of their academic classes (ex: community, residence life, etc.)?

Where can the faculty member go for experiences or support within their intersecting identities?

In the faculty interviews, three of the four participants expressed that Latinx students' intersecting identities, in comparison to white students, had negatively impacted their experiences on campus. Johnston-Guerrero (2016) suggested that the intersection of a student's racial and ethnic identity development can be academically influenced positively or negatively by their educational experience. One of the four participants likened some areas of the campus to be outwardly hostile to Latinx students, such as some classroom environments where students had reported experiencing microaggressions towards their racial identities. The other three participants stated that there were groups and activities at MU that Latinx students could connect with to have a positive experience at MU. All four participants stated that they had had conversations with Latinx students about connections they could make and steered them to groups or areas of the campus that would make an impact on their sense of belonging. Of the experiences that faculty shared with students, the majority of them were connected to student ethnic or racial identity, a few were connected to religious identity, and one was connected to student gender identity.

When participants were asked about spaces on MU's campus to support their intersecting identities, the faculty shared a number of groups that they had been or were currently a part of for their own individual or professional development. As Eager (2019) stated, people of color who have marginalized intersecting identities have suffered more discrimination, social isolation, and rejection, which can create a negative outcome on their future success and social-emotional growth. Three of the four participants spoke

about faculty groups connected with their ethnic or racial identity. Two of the four participants named groups that were a part of their religious identity. Three of the four participants mentioned groups that were engaged in a cross-section of activities, such as helping support student-run organizations on campus or organizations that had connected with the greater-Milwaukee community. All of the groups and activities outlined in the interview were positively associated as ways that the faculty member felt supported and fulfilled individually and professionally within their intersecting identities.

Culturally relevant classroom experiences. Faculty participants were asked the following questions around culturally relevant pedagogy:

To what extent have you utilized culturally relevant pedagogy in your classroom?

- Which courses?
- How did you feel about the course?
- How did the course impact you?
- How did the course impact your students? How did you know?
- What advice do you have for other faculty at MU who may have not yet used or experienced culturally relevant pedagogy?

The faculty participants had many opinions around the use of culturally relevant pedagogy within classrooms and, more personally, within their own classrooms. Nieto (2002) outlined a mindset of honoring each student's cultures, experiences, and histories, within a challenging, critical-thinking classroom. A major factor for faculty, especially the three non-tenured adjunct faculty participants, was the lack of autonomy in creating materials and experiences for the classroom. Three of the four participants pointed out that the course shells were created by someone other than the faculty member, who then

had to try and shape the class into a more personalized experience. Without professional development and support from within departments, the flexibility pointed out by researchers within the field of culturally relevant pedagogy cannot necessarily occur to meet students' needs (Stembridge, 2020).

Connected to the literature, the four conditions of culturally relevant pedagogy; establishing inclusion, developing attitude, enhancing meaning, and engendering competence (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995), were communicated to each faculty participant prior to beginning the interviews. All four faculty participants focused a majority of their responses on the conditions of establishing inclusion as a means to set the tone for the classroom and for the students to develop an understanding that this was a space for all perspectives.

The four faculty participants described professional development, which occurred on campus and was offered by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and the Center for Teaching and Learning at MU. Two participants spoke about an ongoing workshop for all faculty and staff around unlearning racism. Participants had worked with Dr. Martha Barry, Racial Justice Director for the YWCA of Southeast Wisconsin to develop individual capacity to discuss and address issues of racism (MU, 2020). The ongoing workshop discusses implicit bias, the historical implications of race, the role of economic disparity in housing segregation, the meaning of whiteness and internalized racism, and how to build relationships across racial differences. This last portion is a major cornerstone of culturally relevant pedagogy in the classroom. External professional development opportunities were varied and driven mostly by personal goals, interests, or ongoing research and writing.

When the faculty participants were asked specifically about the use of culturally relevant pedagogy within the classroom environment, the courses that were mentioned were mostly around cultural, ethnic, and language studies that were housed in the College of Arts and Sciences, College of Communication, the College of Business Administration and the College of Education. There were no mentions of courses that were part of the core curriculum that all MU students take as part of their degree, outside of their major or minor classes. This is not to say that culturally relevant pedagogy is not embedded in these courses. The remark is meant to remind the researcher that there is a limited sample size in faculty perspective and could signal an extension of this research study.

Strategies. Since all of the faculty participants were aware of and had actively used culturally relevant pedagogy in their classrooms, the researcher followed up with asking which strategies within the four conditions of culturally relevant pedagogy (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995) were most advantageous to student sense of belonging on campus. The responses were compiled as a means of summarization and were mentioned by all four faculty participants.

Relationships. When faculty members were asked to rank the particular strategies, they used in the classroom, positive relationships with students were named in every interview. When faculty members are able to make important connections with the students, as related to curriculum content, students were often more motivated to succeed in their academics and to finish their coursework with success. A second important strategy was cultural sensitivity, which was achieved when the faculty participants were able to restructure or add to the existing core shell, focusing on students' individual stories. One faculty participant warned of the danger of not infusing this throughout the

class. The participant stated that students can feel that this is a disingenuous attempt to have a “cultural day” instead of representing the multiple identities and perspectives during every class. This narrative was duplicated in five of the eleven student interviews.

Engaging in learning. The other strategy designated in the faculty participant interviews was using multiple ways for students to engage in the course materials, such as reading, speaking, listening, and writing, with several self-reflections included. Three out of the four participants used self-reflection as a way for students to recognize their own identities and how they interact with the material and within the class. The faculty role in this becomes more of a facilitator than a leader of the class. While the faculty participants did not claim that this occurred in every class, three participants did commit to portions of every class for these types of activities. This is a fundamental part of culturally relevant pedagogy, which becomes interpersonal and fosters the growth and well-being of individuals (Reis & Gable, 2015).

Recognition of student identity. The last strategy mentioned by three of the four faculty participants was recognizing the identities and experiences of diverse groups, which can assist the faculty member in reviewing their own differences and how bias can be placed on students who may have different values or identities than their own. One of the faculty participants used self-reflection on their own professional practice as a way to connect this strategy to their work and to understand the lives and practices of their students. The most important aspect of these name strategies is that they need to be fluid and flexible, as the students in the classrooms change. MU is becoming a more ethnically and racially diverse campus and the faculty participants stated their support for the HSI pathway initiative and in supporting the current and future students on campus.

Overall Impact

General perceptions around the courses that were taught were positive and that the faculty members felt they had a direct positive impact on students. According to Gay (2010), teachers are culturally competent when able to achieve academic success while developing cultural consciousness. These teachers augment cultural affinity and academic accomplishment through the creation of opportunities for pupils to perform well in school by using resources of the students' cultures at home. One faculty member mentioned that although they had not created the courses they taught, their instruction included viewing students as individuals, considering their strengths, backgrounds, learning styles, and ways of interacting could be validated through the way that they shaped the classroom around the multiple identities, rather than a traditional higher education course centered on the faculty member lecturing. Most importantly, the danger of centering one student's learning experiences and then duplicating that upon another student with a similar racial or ethnic identity, is denied through culturally relevant pedagogy.

Informal mentors. Faculty members often informally mentor students at Marquette University. All four faculty members had participated in an informal mentorship that they initiated from classroom interactions with students. One participant retold the connection they made with a first-generation Latinx student who had taken one of their courses. The student wanted to begin a healthy political debate between the various groups that represented political parties on campus. The faculty member, who also was approached for advice on how to move forward with the idea and how to ensure that many voices were injected into the debate format. The faculty participant worked in tandem with the student on this informally. This event solidified the informal mentor

relationship and the student communicates with the faculty member as an upperclassman about a number of topics, including future career decisions. As stated in the literature, studies around first-generation students demonstrate that facilitating sense of belonging within the structure of the campus community can boost confidence in academics and social-emotional wellness (Peterson & Hamrick, 2009; Sue et al., 2007).

Recommendations from Faculty Participants

Faculty participants spoke to the hiring process that is outlined in MU's Strategic Plan (2013, 2015) under the *Beyond Boundaries* initiative. There is a commitment from MU to hire more tenured-track faculty members. In 2017, there was an announcement that there were five faculty members of color hired with nine additional faculty members to hire to bolster its Race and Ethnic Studies (RAES) program (MU, 2017), which was announced in fall 2017 with a cluster hire of five new faculty.

The Race and Ethnic Studies hiring was a collaboration between the Office of the Provost, the Klingler College of Arts and Sciences, the Diederich College of Communication, the College of Business Administration and the College of Education. The hiring process involved recruiting multiple scholars into one or more departments based on shared, interdisciplinary research interests. Beyond helping to establish Marquette's RAES program, cluster hiring will also help advance faculty diversity, a key priority in the university's strategic plan, *Beyond Boundaries*.

"To achieve diversity, equity and inclusive excellence at Marquette University, we must offer diverse areas of study along with faculty whose backgrounds support it," said Provost and Executive Vice-President for Academic Affairs, Kimo Ah Yun. "We owe it to Marquette students to develop the best possible community of teachers and

scholars on this important and complex topic, and these faculty represent this worthy initiative.” The Race and Ethnic Studies Program is housed in Marquette’s College of Arts and Science, and supports interdisciplinary majors and minors in a number of fields including Africana Studies, LatinX Studies, Arab and Muslim American Studies, Literatures of Diverse Cultures, and Culture, Health and Illness (MU, n.d.).

As of November of 2018, 163 of Marquette’s more than 1,200-member faculty were nonwhite, (MU, 2018), which represents a one percentage point increase from the fall 2013. Currently, 3.4% or 42 of the more than 1,200 Marquette faculty members are black, 6% of the faculty are Asian, and 3% are Hispanic. All other racial minorities each make up less than half a percent of Marquette’s faculty. More than 1,000 of the 1,220-member faculty, or 83%, are white.

Professional development is at the core of these findings. It is clear after analyzing the narratives that the student participants did not feel as engaged and as comfortable in classrooms where culturally relevant pedagogy was not at the center of the faculty member’s practices. The leadership at MU, needs to take a stronger stance at leveraging the participation to cast a wider net around professional development and implementation in order to build a pivotal mass of faculty members across disciplines who study and teach about race, ethnicity and intersectionality. The ways in which systems of power and institutions impact marginalized populations are the major considerations to be made while formulating a professional development plan that includes all faculty and staff at MU. If MU is to move forward with their goal around the HSI designation, they must recognize that competency for all faculty, including regular

training, around pedagogy and curriculum along with critical race theory and culturally relevant practices, is a necessary step forward.

Summary of Findings

Marquette University has envisioned a campus that is more diverse, including enrolling more Latinx students than in the recent past. With an analysis by the Higher Learning Commission and identifying key areas of growth for MU, leadership, with stakeholder input, positioned the strategic plan to have all goals, priorities, actions, and metrics leverage every area of the campus (MU, 2013, 2015). This also created a system of identification, planning, tracking, measuring, and reflecting that are framed by MU's mission, vision, and the Jesuit guiding values. Within the strategic plan, MU named the pathway of becoming an HSI as a goal (MU, 2013).

Within the strategic plan, MU (2013, 2015) has optimized their ability to communicate with Latinx students and their families, recruit students from a variety of regions in the United States, and to matriculate Latinx students at MU. While the needs of Latinx students are varied, MU should be aware of the impact of academic and non-academic programming on campus and the impact on student sense of belonging that have been outlined in the research analysis and findings.

The following themes emerged from the qualitative research study; student sense of belonging was positively impacted when students experienced culturally-relevant pedagogy in their coursework, student identities and their intersectionality impacted the sense of belonging on campus at MU, the participants were satisfied with their experience at MU, but did not have an overwhelming sense that the campus felt like home, and the

experiences outside of academic courses had a major impact on the sense of belonging for the first-generation Latinx student participants.

First-generation Latinx students were the central focus of this study and the role that culturally relevant pedagogy has on their sense of belonging. While the study revealed that the culturally relevant pedagogy did have a positive effect on student sense of belonging, other non-academic experiences also had an impact. The recommendations will be expounded upon in Chapter Five in reviewing culturally relevant pedagogy and non-academic experiences for students and faculty and the impact on first-generation Latinx students' sense of belonging. As these are connected to MU's mission and vision as a Jesuit university and are part of the strategic plan, many stakeholders are, and will continue to be, important in moving forward.

Chapter Five presents a discussion of the results and gives further recommendations for support for first-generation Latinx students at any small, private higher education institution that is on the pathway to becoming a Hispanic serving institution (HSI). There are also recommendations for future research into culturally relevant pedagogy. Future implications for stakeholder groups such as leadership, faculty, and staff, at Marquette University, is included. The final part of the chapter concludes with recommendations for Hispanic serving institutions supporting first-generation Latinx students.

Chapter Five: Discussion

Introduction

The previous chapter revealed the results for this qualitative research study. This chapter will include a discussion of the results and the future applications for stakeholder groups at Marquette University (MU). The conclusion for this chapter will provide recommendations for future research for Hispanic serving institutions (HSIs) in supporting first-generation Latinx students' sense of belonging through culturally relevant pedagogy in the classroom. Furthermore, the literature review around Critical Race Theory (CRT), sense of belonging, and culturally relevant pedagogy related to the findings along with the delimitations, areas of future research, and implications to the leadership team at (MU).

This chapter discusses the research findings and possible future research studies around the original research questions in order to explore the role that culturally relevant pedagogy plays in sense of belonging for first-generation Latinx students at a private Jesuit Catholic institution:

1. What role, if any, does culturally relevant pedagogy play in first-generation Latinx students' sense of belonging at MU?
2. To what extent does this impact the students' feeling that MU is a "home"?
3. What role, if any, do non-academic experiences play in first-generation Latinx students' sense of belonging at MU?

The findings of the study for what impacts first-generation Latinx students and their sense of belonging encompass four themes: (a) students' sense of belonging was positively impacted when students experienced culturally-relevant pedagogy in their

academic courses, (b) the intersection of students' identities played a part in the way they felt at home at Marquette University, (c) students were generally satisfied with their overall experience at MU, but did not consider the campus "home", and (d) Experiences outside of student academic courses had a major impact on first-generation Latinx student sense of belonging on the majority white campus at Marquette University.

MU has created a robust plan to recruit Latinx students, as evident in their strategic enrollment initiative (Marquette University, n.d.). The Jesuit values and mission of inclusivity, social justice, and making an impact on the community are connected to these plans. As the campus has a majority white student population, the inclusiveness of the campus needs to be continuously reviewed, revised and revamped, not just within the period provided for higher education within the six-year assessment cycle. Curriculum and instruction should be at the core of this process, with leadership shoring up resources, reviewing the organizational flow, and hiring the right faculty to teach students. Jeannie Oaks (AERA, 2016) highlighted the benefit of research in that it is a way to grow, learn from others, collaborate to see new perspectives, and to improve our society. The impact of an inclusive campus on first-generation Latinx students should include research-based culturally relevant practices in the classroom.

Interpretation of the Findings

This section will further unpack the findings of the research study and their interpretations, as connected with the literature. McNiff (2013) explained that research should be validated and communicated to the public and it should influence further thought in the research study. Within the four emergent themes from the student participants, student sense of belonging and the impact of culturally-relevant pedagogy,

student identities and sense of belonging, overall student experience and their sense of belonging, and non-academic experiences with sense of belonging. Since this research study is directly focused on Marquette University (MU) and its pathway to becoming a Hispanic serving institutions (HSIs), the topic of culturally relevant pedagogy and sense of belonging for first-generation Latinx students is at the forefront. MU's pathway to becoming an HSI will move the institution from 12% of its current Latinx population to 25% over the next five years. According to Newman, Couturier, and Scurry (as cited in Browne, n.d.), 40% of the future higher education students will be Latinx, with many students becoming the first in their families to attain a post-secondary degree. The future of higher education is more students of color and more students who identify as Latinx.

The major findings that emerged were that students' sense of belonging experienced a positive result when they experienced culturally-relevant pedagogy in their academic courses, the intersection of students' identities had an influence on their connections on campus, while students did enjoy their experience at MU, they did not consider the campus a home, and lastly, the exposure that students had in non-academic settings to develop their intersecting identities were just as powerful on first-generation Latinx sense of belonging as culturally relevant pedagogy.

Gay (2000) revealed that the level of engagement in the classroom and students' experiences are directly connected, especially if they are joined with a faculty member who has reflected upon their own social and cultural identities. This was upheld by the study as students reported that the experience of having someone who reflected their own ethnic or racial identity had an impact on how they participated in the class. Students were also comfortable with sharing more personal information and being themselves,

rather than showing a modified personification of what they needed to show up as in the majority white academic environment (McCoy, McKenzie, & Tuck, 2014).

Student identities and the relationship they had with their identities impacted their answer to MU being considered “home”. Student participants had varying connections with personal identification as Latinx; for example, most students identified as Latinx, some as Afro-Latinx, and one student identified as white. Amongst those identities, there were specifically-named nationalities, Catholicism, and non-white racial identities. Building self-confidence, developing self-awareness, and having the tools to be able to challenge majority white norms within higher education, which can become major barriers to finishing a degree, have major repercussions on first-generation Latinx student sense of belonging and ultimately student success towards higher educational outcomes (Wilkins, 2007).

Students’ ability to connect in non-academic areas of MU’s campus, such as a racial affinity student group, like the Caribbean Islands Student Organization, a Hispanic fraternity, or the living learning dormitories provided in the Global Village dormitory, are increased by these created spaces. All of these experiences have a direct impact on student belonging and student achievement. A community within a larger campus, especially for minority-identifying students, can provide students with the sense of belonging they need to feel at home (Yosso & Lopez, 2010). Participants had a sense of belonging at MU which they related to the groups and workshops that they attended and of which they were members.

An area of interest to the researcher was the varying degree to which culturally-relevant pedagogy in isolation had an impact on first-generation Latinx students on the

one hand or the competing theme of the non-academic experiences that connected students to sense of belonging on MU's campus. While the majority of the literature supported both of these themes from the study, it is clear to the researcher that first-generation Latinx students need to experience a combination of culturally relevant pedagogy and non-academic experiences that support their developing and intersecting identities to further impact their sense of belonging on campus. When the researcher began to hypothesize prior to the participant interviews, the subtle joining of the two themes had not been identified or considered. As the participant interviews were analyzed, the researcher found that the two themes needed to be present in order for first-generation Latinx students to realize their potential on MU's campus.

Implications for Theory and Research

In previous chapters, culturally-relevant pedagogy, intersecting identities, impact on student belonging, and Critical race theory were identified as literature highlighting the research study. The participant interviews included questions around these topics and the connection to MU's campus feeling like a place of comfort and "homelike". Additionally, research results from the student and faculty interviews were placed into themes after the analysis phase. While the study has specifically tested the waters around first-generation Latinx students and their experience with culturally-relevant pedagogy at MU, this study could have implications on any campus that has a white majority population of higher education students.

The marriage of culturally-relevant pedagogy and providing non-academic experiences that support students' intersecting identities was the major backbone of the findings. Higher education institutions are positioned to engineer spaces and experiences

that first-generation Latinx students can develop and process their own identities and with which to engage in new learning with challenging expectations (Ladson-Billings, 2013). MU has an opportunity to move down the pathway to becoming an HSI with a major emphasis on serving the Latinx students on their campus. Utilizing the research findings from this study, along with the supporting literature around culturally-relevant pedagogy and first-generation Latinx student sense of belonging could provide a framework for Marquette University and insight into the success of the HSI initiative.

Challenges. The challenges that have become barriers to improving quality at MU start with curriculum and instructional practices that are grounded in research and that reflect culturally relevant materials. Suskie (2014) mentioned marginalization of well-educated faculty, distrust, and narrow-mindedness as possible obstacles to real improvement in teaching and learning. There is a connection between the culture of isolation and these aforementioned elements. An additional categorization of these root causes is offered, which is fear of loss of what faculty know, of their position of authority of knowledge, and that an “other” may be able to replace them as the expert. As Ladson-Billings (2013, 2014) expressed, the research and work around culturally relevant teaching and its impact have been known for many years, but still truly implementing it with fidelity in institutions has been slow work. The work ahead must replace the feeling of loss and create an action-based model, focused on learning together as a faculty and staff.

The academic and non-academic spaces need to provide balance for students’ developing identities. These spaces should provide comfort and support sense of belonging on MU’s campus, as this has a direct impact on student achievement and

persistence in higher education. The research study found that students needed both a culturally-relevant pedagogical space, provided by a faculty member, and another space or spaces on campus that provide an avenue of exploration for the first-generation Latinx student. Having opportunities for Latinx students to develop their own intersecting identities will have a direct impact on their ability to engage (Torres, et al., 2009). MU should consider the research findings in connecting freshmen first-generation Latinx students to construct their intersecting identities and to express them within many social contexts on campus.

Results

The themes that emerged from the research study were: (a) Students' sense of belonging was positively impacted when they experienced culturally-relevant pedagogy in their academic courses; (b) the intersection of students' identities were a factor in whether students felt at home at MU; (c) students were generally satisfied with their overall experience at MU, but did not consider the campus a home base; and (d) experiences outside of student academic courses had a major impact on the first-generation Latinx students' sense of belonging.

Breaking these themes down further while connecting them to the original research questions reinforced the results of the qualitative study. Theme 1 answered the first research question, "*What role, if any, does culturally relevant pedagogy play in first-generation Latinx students' sense of belonging at MU?*" Theme 2 and 3 answered the second research question, "*To what extent does culturally relevant pedagogy impact the students' feeling that MU is a "home" base?*" Finally Theme 4 addressed the third research question, "*What role, if any, do non-academic experiences play in first-*

generation Latinx students' sense of belonging at MU?” built a framework for leveraging culturally relevant pedagogy in the higher education classroom. The themes, supported by the four conditions; establishing inclusion, developing attitude, enhancing meaning, and engendering competence (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995).

When turning to the faculty interviews, which were used to underline the support and focus on students at MU, there were two themes that emerged: a positive impact on first-generation Latinx students' sense of belonging in the classroom that practiced culturally-relevant pedagogy and the positive impact of non-academic experiences. Faculty participants shared specific classroom strategies connected with the four conditions of culturally relevant pedagogy; establishing inclusion, developing attitude, enhancing meaning, and engendering competence (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995). All of the faculty participants established inclusion as a means to set the tone for the classroom and for the students to develop an understanding that this was a space for all perspectives around relationships, engaging in multiple ways to learn and show learning, and recognition of individual student identity. If these practices were the backbone of MU's pedagogical standards for faculty and they were well-developed, student participants would not have lived the negative experiences around their intersecting identities that were shared in the student participant interviews. Faculty participants in the research study stated that their students were academically successful when given the chance to form relationships that challenged student learning, but also let them know that they were there to support them along the way in whatever way possible.

The unique experiences that faculty participants recalled from their connections with first-generation Latinx students were also the same for their other students. The

literature around the importance of relationships in culturally relevant pedagogical practices would lead to a natural progression of the faculty findings of the students. Constructing and implementing a mentor program is another way in which students could be connected to the campus, providing additional academic and social-emotional guidance. There is a limited amount of research that specifically tracks Latinx students in higher education involved in a mentor program, which is even more limited when addressing the needs of first-generation Latinx students. The literature that does exist implicates a positive relationship between mentees' academic outcomes and sense of belonging with a mentor program (DuBois & Rhodes, 2006; Karcher et al., 2002; Zimmerman et al., 2005). Specific to Latinx students, mentors had a more positive impact on their mentees when they had a similar academic experience, had high academic achievement, thus providing a model for the mentee, and included the students' families in the process.

Implications for Practice

As mentioned previously, there is a challenge to fully implement culturally relevant pedagogical practices on any campus. An additional and equally difficult barrier to overcome is to create a campus that truly highlights the serving part of the Hispanic serving institution. Garcia and Okhidoi's (2015) study analyzed the impact of culturally relevant pedagogy and the servingness of HSIs. The implications for practice support the findings of this research study. HSIs have typically been managed as enrollment driven, rather than truly making organizational changes within institutions that have remained unchanged. A warning for institutions that do not change in order to serve their Hispanic students will uphold historically racial disparities that will produce similar outcomes in

terms of student retention and graduation rates. The way in which MU defines what “servingness” means should be local and focused on the current Latinx students on campus. The planning of how MU serves their Latinx students should be adaptable and flexible for quick transformations, which honors the diversity of the Latinx label, including varying ethnic, socioeconomic, generational status, language preferences, immigration status, and academic preparedness (Garcia & Okhidoi, 2015).

The results of this study have future implications for students, faculty, and leadership at Marquette University and at any higher education institution that is on the pathway to receiving the Hispanic serving institution designation. Various committees, including the Hispanic serving institution steering committee, would be an appropriate space to present this research study. Ms. Jacqueline Black, head of the steering committee, as well as the role of Associate Director of Hispanic Initiatives, has been a resource and has expressed interest in learning the results of the study. In her current role, she collaborates with Dr. Jennifer Maney, Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning. As an initial presentation at MU, the two aforementioned leaders would be an integral step to the research and putting the findings into practice.

The President’s Task Force includes stakeholders from the MU faculty, students, leadership, alumni, and the greater Milwaukee community. Presenting the research study to this group would mean revealing and connecting information that is part of the strategic plan and the mission and vision at MU, which would give the research further strength in moving forward and coordinating action steps. The ultimate outcome would be that more first-generation Latinx students matriculate at MU, are well-connected to the

Jesuit mission and vision, and graduate with a diploma that will support their future next steps in the community.

Implications for students. As previously mentioned, MU should provide a mixed approach to implement the findings of this study; matching culturally relevant pedagogy in the classroom with non-academic student experiences. Students highly engage with spaces that are connected to the social realities and constructions of themselves (Bransford et al., 2000). Within the findings of the research study, students reported that racial affinity groups connected with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI), social justice experiences, such as helping at a housing shelter for refugee seekers on the border of Mexico and the United States, and living in spaces created by MU to connect and support students of color, were examples of non-academic connections they made in order to support their sense of belonging on campus.

One of the optimum goals for students as they step into a new role of college attendee is to graduate with a degree. Whether or not there is a positive campus climate, first-generation Latinx students want to and deserve to graduate. The barriers that are still in existence will not be the obstacles that they cannot overcome. The confidence they can gain from having academic experiences that give them a space to grow, learn, develop, and progress towards their goals will be an investment in a campus climate that supports all students.

These same experiences will also allow for first-generation Latinx students to develop their own intersecting identities. Within classrooms that support culturally relevant pedagogy, students can explore their identities and how they interact within the majority white environment. Students who are able to navigate these spaces with their

own identities intact while being able to express themselves freely, will have more positive academic outcomes (Astin, 1993; Yosso, 2006). Having a strong sense of belonging contributes to a student's individual development, including their intersecting identities, which supports their academic success in higher education (Kuh, 2008).

Implications for faculty. A process in which faculty and staff can engage with each other around culturally relevant pedagogy, inherent bias in education, and to look within their own racial and ethnic identities is needed. Currently faculty and staff can attend workshops on a voluntary basis, without implications as to a consistent path to understanding how to meet first-generation Latinx students' needs in their classroom and how to connect their own intersecting identities, along with their students to impact sense of belonging on campus. A robust and long-term professional development plan should be designed around current needs for faculty and staff. This plan should have the grounded theories and the four conditions of culturally relevant pedagogy; establishing inclusion, developing attitude, enhancing meaning, and engendering competence (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995) at the core. The experiences with faculty and staff should include experiences that enhance current knowledge and move them forward to being able to meet students' needs in their classes and around campus.

Besides the four conditions of culturally relevant pedagogy, Ladson-Billings (1995) suggested that experiencing student success, developing cultural competence along with critical consciousness towards established norms in education, be included in any teacher development. Any program development without inclusion of reflection upon educational practices and the institutional norms that uphold white culture. Without the admittance that the current institutional practices do not serve Hispanic students, moving

forward as a faculty and staff will not be possible (Delpit, 1995), while also understanding that each and every person is on their own path and may experience the process in a different timeline. Lastly, Gay (1995) defined an institution as prepared for their students by offering learning opportunities for everyone to engage in building knowledge around ethnic and cultural diversity.

Some of the possible ways to resolve the stated challenges around engaging all faculty around professional development connected with culturally relevant pedagogy are to leverage already existing resources on campus, such as faculty who are experts in implementation, or who have already experienced ongoing professional development and have expanded their toolbox. An additional engagement tool would be the connection to the MU's mission, to ensure that hiring reflects the student body, and to have cross-departmental conversations about curriculum and instruction, grounded in reflection and student input. The resources involved include money, but it is also faculty who are in classrooms spending their valuable time to relearn the best way to show up for their students, which must be flexible and changing depending, not upon their content expertise, but who is in front of them in their classes. Lastly, the research can serve as a call to action for institutions that have yet to fully serve all of the students on their campus. This is an ongoing effort, should change with the students who are on campus, and should be a reflective process. As Sagendorf et al. (2016) pondered, are all institutions fulfilling the promise to offer a Jesuit education to the students on campus? Many faculty and staff connect to the Jesuit mission and vision of MU. As much as possible, the professional development with embedded culturally relevant pedagogy

should also speak to the Jesuit values, as these are at the core of every part of connecting all stakeholders to MU.

During the onboarding process at MU, new faculty members should have training in culturally relevant pedagogy. This would include reflection upon current beliefs and biases (Castro, 2010; Durden & Truscott, 2013) and curriculum and instruction in higher education, with a focus on a campus that is racially changing with the growth of more Latinx students. The professional development model could be embedded within the first few years of a new faculty member being a part of the institution. Planning for culturally relevant pedagogy, which mirrors the current students in the institution, is not just about the activities, assessments, and discussions, but also includes the thought process and critical connection of the instructor. The process allows for the faculty member to link the what and the how of the instructional loop and avoids a prescribed program that does not meet students' needs (Cochran-Smith et al., 2004; Wei, 2002).

Implications for leadership. Leadership should continue their plan to hire more faculty of color, particularly of tenure-track positions when available. The study found that students having relationships with faculty of color positively impacted their sense of belonging. Beyond helping to establish Marquette's RAES program, cluster hiring will also help advance faculty diversity, a priority in MU's strategic plan, *Beyond Boundaries* (2013). Currently, 163 of Marquette's more than 1,200-member faculty were nonwhite, (MU, 2018), 3.4% of the faculty members are black, six percent of the faculty are Asian, and 3% are Hispanic, while 83% are white.

The following recommendations for leadership at MU emerged from the student portion of the study. The students wished for leadership to probe more into the individual

student background to acknowledge their intersecting identities and to understand how to better support the individual student, rather than a blanket program formed for all Latinx students, by asking the following questions in further research studies:

How did the student arrive at deciding upon registering at MU? Including previous educational experiences?

What do students most enjoy about MU?

What do students know about the HSI pathway? Did that knowledge impact their decision to attend MU?

The following recommendations were formulated from student participant responses.

- Reviewing core courses and the way in which students are looked at when needed to fill in a narrative or perspective.
- Offering more diverse perspectives in major classes.
- Appreciating that future students can and will be supported at MU, but they need to find their own space. Everyone is different.
- Reviewing hiring practices: If the HSI initiative is to continue forward, more Latinx students and faculty should be on MU's campus.
- Finding new ways to integrate the student body at MU. There is a huge divide, perceived or otherwise, that separates the Latinx students and other students of color and the white students at MU.

Review of course structure, including new core curriculum: When the faculty participants were asked specifically about the use of culturally relevant pedagogy within the classroom environment, the courses that were mentioned were mostly around cultural,

ethnic, and language studies that were housed in the College of Arts and Sciences, College of Communication, the College of Business Administration and the College of Education. There were no mentions of courses that were part of the core curriculum that all MU students take as part of their degree, outside of their major or minor classes. For first-generation Latinx students, their success may be more challenging than the majority white students on campus. Gay (2000) underscored the importance of culturally relevant pedagogy and development in faculty who highlighted assets that students brought to their classrooms and used relationships to invite students to contribute to the overall environment.

As previously mentioned in the implications for practice section of this chapter, there is a lack of research that HSIs are, in fact, serving their students. Servingness leads to the ability for MU to matriculate and educate Latinx students according to their individual needs. This also speaks to the ability of the institution to utilize culturally relevant pedagogy, to transform the organizational structure to honor the students' needs, to have rigorous expectations and outcomes outlined for the Latinx students on campus, and to provide personal empowerment in the form of non-academic experiences (Garcia, 2020). As stated in the previous chapter's research findings, the ability for MU to offer experiences outside of the classroom to connect Latinx students to the social justice mission of the Jesuits and to offer spaces for Latinx students to explore their intersecting identities, will impact student sense of belonging and their ability to remain in higher education to pursue a degree.

Recommendations for Future Research

The evaluation of the Hispanic serving institution and the program outcomes is at the heart of reviewing culturally relevant pedagogy and first-generation Latinx student sense of belonging at Marquette University. While institutions are complex educational organizations that have intricate variables that continue to change; adjunct and tenure-track faculty, new students, budget constraints, communities, and other factors, the pathway to becoming an HSI is a worthy one connected to MU's mission and vision for the future sustainability of the campus.

There were few delimitations from the qualitative research study, but do not affect the validity of the findings. There is trustworthiness to the results as students were recruited only via their identity as a first-generation Latinx MU student. A further research study may want to include students who never experienced culturally-relevant pedagogy and had not been involved in any campus organization, trip, or a living learning experience at MU. The comparison of the two results could further implicate the validity of this research study or include more questions that had not yet been considered.

This research study underscores the importance of MU investigating, in a more profound way, the relationship between culturally relevant pedagogy and student sense of belonging. In particular, courses that are considered a part of the core curriculum at MU should be reviewed. Future studies may also be able to drill down on specific faculty professional development around culturally relevant pedagogy that prepares them for future students and supporting their sense of belonging. Culturally relevant pedagogy is not only a cultural celebration, which has misled faculty members in the past who have not examined their own expectations for minoritized students. Learning is embedded in

culturally relevant pedagogy and high expectations within academics are also used to inform student engagement (Leonard, Napp & Adeleke, 2009). Further research into faculty beliefs around culturally relevant pedagogy should be acquired prior to the creation of more professional development at MU.

Participants in this study were all first-generation Latinx students, but perhaps categorizing freshmen, sophomores, juniors, seniors, and fifth year students, along with their specific identities, would be worth researching. Out of the 11 first-generation student participants, only one did not identify as Latinx. Narrowing the Latinx identity even further may help support MU and other institutions on the pathway to best serving their students in the classroom. Nationally, first-generation Latinx students lag behind their white peers in bridging the gap between enrolling in four-year colleges and universities and attaining degrees within six years. At MU, 90% of Latinx students are retained from freshman year enrollment to sophomore year (MU, 2018). After six years, 78% of Latinx students graduate, with white students graduating at a rate of 83%. While this data is encouraging for MU, it is also from a cohort of students from 2013, which is the year that the current strategic plan was put into place. Beginning the pathway to an HSI designation was first discussed in 2013. Data from 2022 and 2023 will give MU more perspective as to student success in the form of retention and graduation rates as the overall Latinx student enrollment rate increases.

Summary

The findings of the study for what impacts first-generation Latinx students and their sense of belonging encompass four themes: (a) students' sense of belonging was positively impacted when students experienced culturally-relevant pedagogy in their

academic courses; (b) the intersection of students' identities played a part in the way they felt at home at Marquette University; (c) students were generally satisfied with their overall experience at MU, but did not consider the campus "home"; and (d) Experiences outside of student academic courses had a major impact on first-generation Latinx student sense of belonging on the majority white campus at Marquette University. Subsequently, the connection between culturally-relevant pedagogy and non-academic experiences are the keys to positively impacting first-generation Latinx students' sense of belonging.

This chapter began with a discussion of the findings of the research study, followed by implications for the various stakeholder groups; students, faculty, leadership at MU, and the Milwaukee community. There were several recommendations outlined in this chapter for serving Latinx students. Lastly, the chapter offered future research options within the topics of culturally relevant pedagogy and supporting first-generation Latinx student sense of belonging, along with their developing intersecting identities.

This research study concluded that culturally relevant pedagogy, outlined by Nieto (2002) as a mindset of honoring each student's cultures, experiences, and histories, within a challenging, critical-thinking classroom, was beneficial to not only the first-generation Latinx students' sense of belonging on a majority White campus, but to other students in the classroom. The students reported overall that they felt more at home in these classrooms than in other classes or departments. The results are consistent regardless of the level of fidelity of implementation of culturally relevant pedagogy in the faculty members' classrooms.

This study researches the connection between culturally relevant pedagogy and first-generation Latinx student sense of belonging on a majority White private, Jesuit

campus. However, it also examines the relationship between how leadership can support “initiatives” that are also connected to the institutional mission and vision. Effectively, to become a truly serving institution to the Latinx students on campus, there must be a vision that connects all supports on campus together. This includes faculty and staff that do not typically attend professional development, must consider how to leverage the mission and vision or to damage students’ sense of belonging and ultimately their ability to confer a degree in higher education.

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Appendix A: Consent Form Student Participants

My name is Rachel Abel, and I am a student at National Louis University. I am asking you to participate in the study, “Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Impact on First-Generation Latinx Student Sense of Belonging”, occurring from 01-2020 to 04-2020. The purpose of this study is to highlight the impact of culturally relevant pedagogy on first-generation Latinx student sense of belonging at an emerging Hispanic serving institution (HSI). This study will add to current literature, which focuses on the close, meaningful relationships that culturally relevant pedagogy brings to the classroom. This form outlines the purpose of the study and provides a description of your involvement and rights as a participant.

By signing below, you are providing consent to participate in a research project conducted by Rachel Abel, student at National Louis University, Chicago.

Please understand that the purpose of the study is to explore the impact of culturally relevant pedagogy on student sense of belonging. Participation in this study will include:

1 individual interview scheduled at your convenience in the winter of the second semester of the 2019-2020 academic year.

- Interviews will last up to 45 minutes and include approximately 10 questions to understand how culturally relevant pedagogy impacts student sense of belonging.
- Interviews will be recorded and participants may listen to the recordings and review the transcripts for final approval of the content.

Your participation is voluntary and can be discontinued at any time without penalty or bias. The results of this study may be published or otherwise reported at conference,s and employed to inform of impact of culturally relevant pedagogy on first-generation Latinx student sense of belonging at Marquette University, but participants’ identities will in no way be revealed (data will be reported anonymously and bear no identifiers that could connect data to individual participants). To ensure confidentiality the researcher will secure recordings, transcripts,and field notes in a locked cabinet in her home office. Only Rachel Abel will have access to data. Lastly, all data collected during the research study will be destroyed completely after 3 years.

There are no anticipated risks or benefits, no greater than that encountered in daily life. Further, the information gained from this study could be useful to Marquette University and other institutions looking to support first-generation Latinx students.

Upon request you may receive summary results from this study and copies of any publications that may occur. Please email the researcher, Rachel Abel at rabel2@my.nl.edu to request results from this study.

In the event that you have questions or require additional information, please contact the researcher, Rachel Abel, rabel2@my.nl.edu.

If you have any concerns or questions before or during participation that has not been addressed by the researcher, you may contact Dr. Jamal Scott at jscott51@nl.edu, the co-chairs of NLU's Institutional Research Board: Dr. Shaunti Knauth, email: Shaunt.Knauth@nl.edu; phone: (312) 261-3526; or Dr. Kathleen Cornett: email: kcornett@nl.edu; phone: (844) 380-5001. Co-chairs are located at National Louis University, 122 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL.

Thank you for your consideration.

Consent: I understand that by signing below, I am agreeing to participate in the study "Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Impact on First-Generation Latinx Student Sense of Belonging". My participation will consist of the activities below from 02-2020 to 04-2020.

- 1 interview lasting approximately 45 minutes each

(Student) Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

Appendix B: Consent Form Faculty Participants

My name is Rachel Abel, and I am a student at National Louis University. I am asking you to participate in the study, “Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Impact on First-Generation Latinx Student Sense of Belonging”, occurring from 01-2020 to 04-2020. The purpose of this study is to highlight the impact of culturally relevant pedagogy on first-generation Latinx student sense of belonging at an emerging Hispanic serving institution (HSI). This study will add to current literature, which focuses on the close, meaningful relationships that culturally relevant pedagogy brings to the classroom. This form outlines the purpose of the study and provides a description of your involvement and rights as a participant.

By signing below, you are providing consent to participate in a research project conducted by Rachel Abel, student at National Louis University, Chicago.

Please understand that the purpose of the study is to explore the impact of culturally relevant pedagogy on student sense of belonging. Participation in this study will include:

1 individual interview scheduled at your convenience in the winter of the second semester of the 2019-2020 academic year.

- Interviews will last up to 45 minutes and include approximately 10 questions to understand how culturally relevant pedagogy impacts student sense of belonging.
- Interviews will be recorded and participants may listen to the recordings and review the transcripts for final approval of the content.

Your participation is voluntary and can be discontinued at any time without penalty or bias. The results of this study may be published or otherwise reported at conference,s and employed to inform of impact of culturally relevant pedagogy on first-generation Latinx student sense of belonging at Marquette University, but participants’ identities will in no way be revealed (data will be reported anonymously and bear no identifiers that could connect data to individual participants). To ensure confidentiality the researcher will secure recordings, transcripts, and field notes in a locked cabinet in her home office and will be the only person able to access the data. Lastly, all data collected during the research study will be destroyed completely after 3 years.

There are no anticipated risks or benefits, no greater than that encountered in daily life. Further, the information gained from this study could be useful to Marquette University and other institutions looking to support first-generation Latinx students.

Upon request you may receive summary results from this study and copies of any publications that may occur. Please email the researcher, Rachel Abel at rael2@my.nl.edu to request results from this study.

In the event that you have questions or require additional information, please contact the researcher, Rachel Abel, rael2@my.nl.edu.

If you have any concerns or questions before or during participation that has not been addressed by the researcher, you may contact Dr. Jamal Scott at jscott51@nl.edu, the co-chairs of NLU's Institutional Research Board: Dr. Shaunti Knauth, email: Shaunti.Knauth@nl.edu; phone: (312) 261-3526; or Dr. Kathleen Cornett: email: kcornett@nl.edu; phone: (844) 380-5001. Co-chairs are located at National Louis University, 122 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL.

Thank you for your consideration.

Consent: I understand that by signing below, I am agreeing to participate in the study "Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Impact on First-Generation Latinx Student Sense of Belonging". My participation will consist of the activities below from 02-2020 to 04-2020.

- 1 interview lasting approximately 45 minutes each

(Faculty) Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

Appendix C: IRB Approval Letter



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February 12, 2020

Rachel Abel

Dear Rachel Abel:

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) has received your application for your research study "Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Impact on First-Generation Latinx Student Sense of Belonging". IRB has noted that your application is complete and that your study has been approved by your primary advisor and an IRB representative. Your application has been filed as Expedited in the Office of the Provost.

IRB: ER00726

Please note that the approval for your study is for one year, from February 12, 2020 to February 12, 2021. As you carry out your research, you must report any adverse events or reactions to the IRB.

At the end of your approved year, please inform the IRB in writing of the status of the study (i.e. complete, continuing). During this time, if your study changes in ways that impact human participants differently or more significantly than indicated in the current application, please submit a Change of Research Study form to the IRB, which may be found on NLU's IRB website.

All good wishes for the successful completion of your research.

Sincerely,

Shaunti Knauth, Ph.D.
Chair, IRB

Appendix D: Promotional Flyer for Participants

LOOKING FOR PARTICIPANTS!



THE PURPOSE OF THIS RESEARCH IS TO REVIEW THE CONNECTION BETWEEN FIRST-GENERATION LATINX STUDENT SENSE OF BELONGING AND CULTURALLY RELEVANT PEDAGOGY.

TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY YOU MUST BE:

- A CURRENT MU STUDENT,
- 18 YEARS OLD,
- IDENTIFY AS FIRST-GENERATION AND LATINX
- *** PARTICIPANTS WILL RECEIVE A STARBUCKS GIFT CARD

Interested? Get in touch! 847-507-0371 rabel2@nl.edu OR use the QR code below:

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